




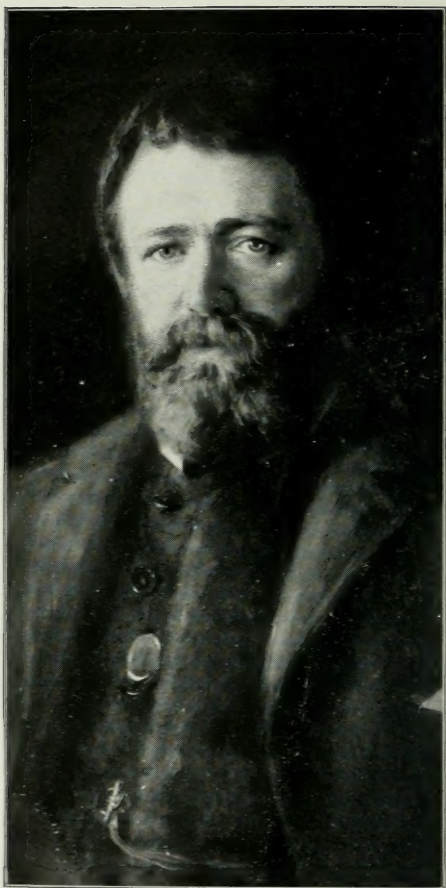
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G. M. FAIRCHILD, JR.



Yours faithfully
G M. Fairchild Jr.

A RIDICULOUS COURTING

AND OTHER STORIES OF
FRENCH CANADA

BY

G. M. FAIRCHILD, JR.

AUTHOR OF "ROD AND CANOE, RIFLE AND SNOWSHOE,"
"A WINTER CARNIVAL," ETC.



CHICAGO

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1900

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A Ridiculous Courting

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PRAXADE JENESSE stood leaning over his pig-pen one early morning quite unmindful of the noisy clamor of its two occupants. They had, however, reminded him of a conversation with the curé the night before, after he had made his confession. The good man had rebuked him again for continuing to live like a—yes, like one of his own pigs, instead of marrying and becoming a respectable citizen. *Bon Dieu!* this getting married was a very great responsibility. Where was he, Praxade Jenesse, to find a wife who would fulfill all the conditions so necessary to a life partnership? Had he not canvassed the possi-

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bilities of every spinster in the parish, who were all wanting in some particular? He wished the curé was not set about his marrying, so that he might take more time to look about him; for really one could not be too careful in taking so important a step. At this point his meditation was interrupted by the sound of an approaching cart, and looking up the road he saw Prudent Tranquille, the pork butcher from Terre Blanche, approaching, his round red face beaming like a sunburst. He stopped and dismounted.

“*Bien*, Praxade! Wishing you had a wife as fat and tender as one of your own pigs?” Here Prudent laughed at his own porcine wit. Everything was piggy with Prudent, from long association with that animal alive and dead.

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“How do you know I was thinking of a wife?” answered Praxade somewhat sheepishly.

“Bah! When a man of your age is not married he thinks of nothing else, my friend, and it keeps him poor in flesh, and mangy. What you want is a nice plump little wife .

“Perhaps.”

“With some streaks of lean through her?”

“Of course!”

“Not too heavy or old.”

“The Lord forbid!”

“And easy on her feed.”

“Quite true!”

“With a nice little outfit and a full bin.”

“You are inspired, Prudent!”

“And lots of root in her.”

“Ha! ha! Prudent, you have described an angel!”

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“Bah! I find such angels every day grunting because they can’t find husbands. It takes a pork butcher to weigh you all up and pen you,” laughed Prudent. “Come, Praxade, promise me the fattest pig in your pen if I find you a wife.”

Prudent’s freehand sketch of charming femininity had quite captivated Praxade, and the offer seemed to promise him relief from his perplexity. He closed with Prudent at once, only cautioning him to be very sure; one could not be too careful.

“*Bon*, you will see. Come to me Sunday after mass,” replied Prudent, as he drove off.

About half-way down the long hill which led directly into the heart of the village of Terre Blanche lived Urbain Clarisse and

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his daughter Ursule. The Clarisse house was high-peaked and dormered, and stood flush with the roadway. It was painted a pale green, with orange trimmings. A highly polished brass knocker graced the door, but the house's principal claim to distinction lay in its windows, which were ablaze with gorgeously printed paper shades representing pots of rare exotics in fullest bloom. It was very deceptive, very gay; but then Urbain could afford such luxuries. Was he not entered on the rolls of the secretary-treasurer of the parish as a *rentier*, and his income from his investments was certainly not less than one hundred and fifty dollars a year. To live up to all this with dignity, Urbain did nothing but smoke and talk politics with his neighbors. He was a

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widower with only the one daughter, Ursule. She had passed the first blush of maidenhood, but was still comely of appearance, dark-haired, black-eyed, and round of figure. As became the daughter of a *rentier*, she possessed a number of accomplishments not given to girls less fortunately born. She could play an accompaniment on the wheezy little harmonium that graced the parlor while she sang "A la Claire Fontaine" and "Vive la Canadienne" in fair voice, if in somewhat uncertain time with the instrument. At the village convent she had also learned that pleasing art of embroidering on perforated board the figures of saints and angels in heavenly colors, so much admired when framed and hung in the Sunday room. She was a thrifty house-

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wife, moreover, and could spin and knit and make her own *catalogne*. The only reason she had not married will shortly appear.

Close beside the pretentious house of Urbain Clarisse stood the modest tiny home of the Widow Denancour. It was whitewashed very clean and red-gabled. In the one little window which looked upon the street were several pots of real geraniums, by no means as effective as the printed flowers upon the shades of the windows in Urbain's house; but the Widow Denancour was not entered as a *rentier*, and such things make all the difference in this world in the point of esteem in which our surroundings are viewed.

The widow at one period of her loneliness had cast tender eyes at Urbain, and had hoped—but that

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was all past. For some years prior to our story her woman's subtle arts had been directed to making a match between her son Joe and Ursule, as the only means left for uniting the fortunes of the two families. The Denancours' fortune consisted of the little cottage, two feather beds, and a chest of homespun, hand-woven linen carefully packed in bergamot; but then they had expectations. The widow's uncle, the Abbé Pontin, was very old and rich, and he had no other relatives. This relationship enabled the Denancours to hold their heads high in the parish.

When the widow went to spin for the afternoon with Ursule, and the two spinning-wheels were humming in unison, the former would cunningly turn the conversation to Joe. Poor fellow! He

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worked so hard, she was really anxious about him. M'sieu' La Farge, the mill owner, had told her that Joe was the steadiest fellow in his employ. Had Ursule noted how thin Joe had grown lately? Her uncle, the Abbé, had made Joe his heir, and some day he, too, would be a *rentier*.

There was a time when Ursule enjoyed listening to these praises of Joe, but of late she had grown somewhat impatient of the discourse, and the subject of it. Her wheel would go completely out of time with the widow's, an occurrence which never failed to break the latter's thread, as well as the thread of her argument.

It was about time Joe proposed if he was ever going to, thought Ursule. Her looking-glass told her she had lost some of the fresh-

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ness of youth, and the hour-glass of Time that she was older. Most of her school companions were married, while she remained single. She would soon be called an old maid, and that was a disgrace. Here a vicious dig on the pedal was certain to break her own thread; then she would leave her wheel to make the cup of tea that brought the spinning to a close for the day.

A friendship had begun between Joe and Ursule in mud-pie-making childhood. It had endured through the callow period of youth, when it found expression in bouquets and marguerites on Joe's part, and book-markers on hers, inscribed in wools "*A mon ami.*" In maidenhood and manhood it found its note in a liking for each other's company, and that

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perfect freedom of intercourse that follows an early and uninterrupted friendship; but Joe had never breathed of love or marriage, though he was impatient of any other suitors, and Ursule had hitherto been indifferent to them. Urbain had once said to Joe: "Whenever you want to marry Ursule I will buy you a farm and we will all live together." Joe had laughed, and replied that there was no hurry, that his mother must be cared for yet a while. Sly Joe! It was all so pleasant as it was. He felt so sure.

When Prudent Tranquille drove into Terre Blanche in the evening of the day of his interview with Praxade Jenesse, he met Ursule coming from vespers.

"Good evening, little piggy,"—Prudent was on terms of easy

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familiarity with every one in the parish, as a man of substance and weight, and of intimate acquaintance arising from his frequent visitations in the way of business —“I found a fine bachelor grunter to-day who is coming to be weighed next Sunday after mass, but he is losing flesh fast in his anxiety to meet you, and he is soft, very soft, of heart. What do you say, little squealer, shall I bring him to you to be cured?”

“You may do just as you like, Prudence Tranquille. Bachelors are always pigs, anyway, and I’ve no use for them.”

“So, so, little one; but not after they have had their bristles shaved and the marriage-ring put through their noses. They lead easily then.”

Praxade came on Sunday, but

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with some misgivings—one had to be so very careful. He made a fine appearance, however, in his *castor*, frock-coat, flaming red tie, and kid gloves. He drove in a *buggie*, and seemed to have difficulty in restraining the fiery ardor of his horse, and actually brought him on his haunches at Prudent's door before he could be stopped, after many *arretes-doncs*. It was very well done, and showed a high spirit in the horse and a nice mastery on the part of Praxade. Prudent awaited him, and after *un coup* they drove away to the house of Urbain Clarisse.

Ursule welcomed them in the parlor, and during the general conversation both she and Praxade took note of each other. Prudent quickly departed to walk home.

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"Have you ever been in the parish of Belle Isle, Mamselle?" asked Praxade.

"No, M'sieu'," replied Ursule; then, somewhat inconsequentially, "but I sometimes go to Quebec."

"Ah! Quebec is grand, magnificent! Belle Isle, though, Mamselle, is a paradise for tranquillity. I have a *belle cage* there, but"—with a slightly nervous laugh—"no bird in it yet."

"Birds in Belle Isle, M'sieu' Jenesse, must be shy of cages."

"Not so, Mamselle; but when one has a *belle cage* one does not want a crow for an occupant, and sometimes we must go far for a *rossignol*. They are scarce, Mamselle, and one must be so very careful."

"*Rossignols* soon cease singing when caged, M'sieu' Jenesse; and

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then what matters it, there is only the difference of feathers."

"If fine feathers make fine birds, Mamselle, then there are two great differences. Will you permit me, Mamselle, to drive you as far as my *belle cage*, that I may have the pleasure of showing it to you?"

"You are too kind, M'sieu' Jenesse. I should, however, like to see the church of Belle Isle."

When Praxade gallantly handed Ursule into the *buggie* she glanced triumphantly toward the Denancour house, but as neither Joe nor the widow was visible her pleasure was somewhat dampened. She made herself agreeable to Praxade, however, and the drive was an enjoyable one.

The following Sunday Praxade came again, but this time he drew

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up before Urbain Clarisse's door with a great flourish. His caution had now given place to the ardor of a man whose mind was quite made up to a certain line of action without having to lose any further time in considering it. Ursule played and sang for him, and when she had finished she seated herself at one end of the little hair-covered sofa. Praxade took the other. The time had come for him to declare himself.

"I trust, Mamselle, that you found a liking for Belle Isle after your drive there?"

"The church of Belle Isle, M'sieu' Jenesse, is very pretty."

"And what do you think of my *belle cage*, Mamselle?"

"An empty cage, M'sieu' Jenesse, is but a dreary place."

"You are right, Mamselle, but

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all that would change if you would consent to occupy it."

"But my papa, M'sieu' Jenesse?"

"He shall live with us, Mamselle."

"In that case, M'sieu' Jenesse, I consent."

"Ursule, you are an angel."

"Praxade, you are crushing my sleeve."

"Will you name the day, Ursule?"

"Let us say the Wednesday before Michaelmas, Praxade."

"I will tell the curé to publish the first notice next Sunday."

Gossip sped swiftly in the parish of Terre Blanche; Madame Sylvain, who kept the toll bridge, was the receiver and dispatcher. As she slowly made the change for passer-by she asked the news, and

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then gave her own budget, interspersed with liberal comments considerably tinged with maliciousness. It was not good to come under her unsparing review, but it was quite delicious to listen to her discussing the affairs of others. When old Madame Neveau, early on Monday morning, on her rounds through the village with her little load of eggs, parsley, onions, potatoes, and other odds and ends, came to the bridge, Madame Sylvain held her in conversation while she fumbled about in her pocket for a penny in change.

"Bon Dieu! the duplicity of some people. To think of Ursule Clarisse keeping Joe Denancour hanging about her, and yet receiving the attentions of Praxade Jenesse. Unmarried women no

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longer possessed any modesty. When Praxade passed last night she had asked him if he were coming often to Terre Blanche, and he had replied with a laugh, not after Michaelmas. What did that mean? If Joe Denancour had any spirit left in him he would send Praxade to the right-about and give Ursule a piece of his mind. But he is so soft and slow, one has no patience with him. Ah! here is the penny, Madame Neveau."

Before midnight everybody in Terre Blanche had discussed the affair, but it is a curious phase of gossip that the parties most concerned in it are always the last to learn what is said. This lends to it that delightful charm of mystery. Joe and his mother had spent the Sunday with Madame's uncle, the

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Abbé Pontin. Monday evening, however, he dropped in to pass an hour with Ursule, as was his wont. She wore a ring which Praxade had given her, and she took several occasions to make it conspicuous, but Joe seemed most stupid, and failed to notice it. Neither did he observe a nervousness of manner on her part. Would he never understand? Was he never to show any sign, thought Ursule; must she tell him?

“Joe.”

“Well, Ursule.”

“I am going to be married at Michaelmas.”

“What!” exclaimed Joe, and his heart gave a big thump.

“I have accepted Praxade Jenesse.”

“That fellow!” said Joe in disgust. “Why, Ursule, I always in-

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tended marrying you myself some day."

"Did you, Joe; and do you still feel the same about it?"

"Such a question, Ursule."

"Would you marry me yet, Joe?"

"*Mon Dieu!* just you try me, Ursule."

"But what about Praxade, Joe?"

"Bother Praxade!"

"Let us go to the curé, Joe, and hear what he has to say."

"He must be made to listen to us, Ursule."

Curé Saucier was at work in his little garden when they arrived. He pushed his spectacles over his forehead, and just the faint tremor of a smile appeared at the corners of his mouth. He more than half suspected the errand which had

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brought them. Searching minds through the confessional must, in time, give one the power of divining motive.

"Good evening, my children."

"Father Saucier," said Joe, after acknowledging the curé's salutation, "Ursule's banns with Praxade Jenesse were to be called next Sunday in church."

"Yes, my son."

"Now, Father, for Praxade Jenesse you must call Joe Denancour."

"How is that, my son; we do not marry by proxy?"

"Praxade's proxy!" roared Joe; "the saints forbid! No, Father Saucier, Ursule has changed her mind and she is going to marry me."

"This is a serious matter, my children, and we must consider."

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"But it must be done," persisted Joe.

"And what do you say to all this, Ursule?" asked the curé.

"I will marry no one but Joe now, Father Saucier."

"You have received a ring from Monsieur Jenesse."

"Yes, Father; but Joe will send him its cost, and I will keep it as Joe's gift."

"Since it must be, my children, come into the house and I will dictate a letter for Ursule to send to Monsieur Jenesse."

It read about as follows: "I have reconsidered my answer to you, Monsieur Jenesse, and I am to be married to Joe Denancour at Michaelmas. Accept my sincere wishes for your future happiness."

Praxade's reply came a few days later. It was laconic, but ap-

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peared to breathe a generous spirit. "Mademoiselle Clarisse will receive a wedding present from me the day after she becomes Madame Denancour."

"How nice of him," said Ursule. "What do you think it will be, Joe?"

"Perhaps the pig he promised Prudent," slyly insinuated Joe.

"O, Joe!"

The wedding was a very gay one. After the ceremony the bride and groom entered an open barouche drawn by a pair of white horses, driven by a coachman in top boots and livery, with whip bedecked with bright ribbons. A retinue of friends followed in less pretentious rigs, and a round of the parish followed, with much feasting and dancing wherever they stopped; the fiddler accom-

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panied the party from the start. When the bride and groom reached home the following morning a courtly stranger met them at their threshold. "Madame and Monsieur Denancour, I presume," politely touching his hat.

"Yes," said Joe.

"I've a wedding present for you both from your friend Monsieur Jenesse," and the courtly gentleman smiled and handed each of them a bulky envelope.

Ursule quickly tore hers open. "The wretch!" was all she said as she handed the paper to Joe.

The courtly gentleman came to Joe's assistance. "It is the service of a writ at the instance of Praxade Jenesse in a suit for fifty dollars' damages against Ursule, wife of Joe Denancour, for the loss of her affections, the cost of a stove,

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and the value of a new suit of clothes," and here the courtly gentleman smiled again.

"Pshaw!" said Joe; "it's cheap to get rid of Monsieur Praxade at such a price."

The Return of Little Papita

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THE potency of Trader La Brue's whisky *blanc*, raw high wines from an illicit still, had lent to Honoré Gouleau that high order of fighting courage which enables a man to beat his wife with the pleasurable satisfaction that comes of wiping out old domestic scores and of restoring harmony in the family circle. There are no divorce courts on the Labrador Peninsula for ventilating and settling marital infelicities. Justice is administered by the aggrieved party in such fashion as commends itself to his liking and with a due sense of the enormity of the offense. Such public opinion as

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there was left at LaBrue's camp at the forks of the Nisiicatchin in the late October days fully justified Honoré for the castigation he had given his good-looking Montagnais wife. Gossip had long been busy with her name and that of Flavien LaMarche, and LaBrue had been heard to declare that trouble would come of it when Honoré returned from Port of Brest. Perhaps it was he who informed Honoré, for he bore La Marche no good will, as his rival for the trade of the two or three dozen families of Montagnais which centered at the camp in the golden days of summer to bask in the sunshine of a brief plenty from the traders' stores.

Having driven his wife cowering to a corner of the cabin, Honoré, overcome with his exertions

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and the effects of the whisky, and with a sneaking pity for the mother of his child, snatched up the little Papita, and mingling his maudlin tears with her terrified ones, together they fell asleep on the bed, and silence reigned in the house.

That night the snow came, and with the gray dawn of day the white mantle of Northland winter lay deep on the ground. The east wind, through the gloomy spruce forest, sang the requiem of departed summer, and the river flowed dark and angrily to the gulf.

It was LaBrue, covered with snow, standing over him and roughly shaking him by the shoulder, that awakened Honoré late in the morning.

“Well, my pretty dreamer,

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would you spend all your time in sleep? Come, up with you, for by my heart of hearts you need to be stirring. The gay birds have flown before the winter's storm, and LaMarche's cabin is empty and barred. Do you hear," exclaimed LaBrue, "what I am saying?"

Honoré, but half comprehending, sat stupidly staring at La Brue.

"I say," repeated LaBrue, "that LaMarche is gone and your cage, my fierce one, seems to be emptied."

Grasping now the full import of LaBrue's words, Honoré sprang to his feet with a cry of pain like that of a wounded animal. Even hardened LaBrue was touched before the first terrible outbreak of the man's grief at the loss of the

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darling little Papita, "the light of his eyes," "the joy of his days."

"A thousand maledictions upon them that robbed me of *ma Petite*, but I will trail them, LaBrue," and Honoré, brushing LaBrue aside, rushed wildly in the direction of LaMarche's cabin. The trail, however, lay buried beneath the snow.

The comedy was played, the tragedy had begun.

Public sentiment being quite satisfied that Honoré had done all that was necessary to vindicate the fair name of the camp, refused further to concern itself with his affairs. Besides, who could tell whither LaMarche had gone? Perhaps to the coast, or into the mountains of the north. Honoré stormed and wept, but no one would stir.

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It was at this juncture that Honoré sought me at my cabin, where I was busy completing my report of exploration in the interior for the government at Quebec. Honoré and I had shared many camp-fires, had starved together in the Pipounoukhi mountains, and once wintered upon the great tableland of the interior. I sat long with him that night, and we smoked many silent pipes before I finally said:

“Honoré, we will go up the river into the mountains of the Khichikoua, and we will trap and hunt there and look for the trail of LaMarche where the three rivers head.”

And Honoré bowed his head and answered: “It is well; the master has decided wisely.”

A week later we entered the

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silent, somber forest, and for many days thereafter the trail of our snowshoes lay through it or upon the frozen river, until we came to the stream that led us to the great Lake Meskenan. At the Indian trappers' camps, where we stopped, our inquiries about LaMarche met with the one response; he had not passed that way.

A deep gloom settled upon Honoré; he spoke but little and brooded over his trouble. When our camp-fire at night sent dancing shadows far into the forest, he went forth and knelt long and reverently in the snow, and with simple faith offered up supplications to the Holy Virgin to restore to him his child.

Near the shores of the great lake we built a camp of spruce

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logs and set our trails of dead-falls for many miles. The season and fortune favored us at first, and our camp was hung with stretched pelts; but as the season of Christmas approached fierce storms swept over the lake, and drove the snow in wild confusion far into the forest. Our traps were buried, but it mattered little, for no animal moved. The *cree-cree* of nuthatch was alone heard above the winds. Honoré now took to carving strange things out of wood that bore fanciful resemblances to dolls and animals. He also dressed some beaver-skins and fashioned them into queer garments, but he vouchsafed no information and I refrained from questioning him. But I understood. He had not given up hope.

Two days before Christmas I

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packed a few necessities, and announced to Honoré that I intended crossing the mountains into the valley of the Amiscouakhi to look for caribou wherewith to make our Christmas dinner, for meat had now become a scarcity in camp.

“The *bon Dieu* be with you, master, and bring you back safe. You will also look for ‘the trail’?” And Honoré with a deep sigh turned again to his carving.

Near the dusk of the Christmas eve I labored up the valley of the Amiscouakhi under a heavy burden of caribou meat, but my mind had turned to the Christmas times of long ago, and recalling some bit of boyish pleasantry, I laughed aloud. An answering cry came back—so weird, so penetrating in the keen, still air, so unlike that of

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an animal, so unlike anything that I could recall, that I instantly dropped my pack, cocked my rifle, and stood at guard. Again the cry, but fainter; and now it bore a human sound. Nevertheless I advanced cautiously, and pushed aside the branches of a little balsam thicket. There, before me, was a small birch-bark tepee, half buried in the snow. Opening the flap I peered into the darkened interior.

A child's voice, querulous with illness, said: "Is that you, *maman*? Papita cold and hungry."

For an instant I stood transfixed with astonishment, and then I replied:

"No, little one; it is not *maman*, but some one who has come to take you to papa."

Tearing a piece of birch-bark

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“ No, little one; it is not ~~man~~,
but some one who has come to
take you to papa.”

Tearing a piece of birch-bark

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from the wall, I made a torch. Under a pile of old rags and skins lay the little creature. Her wan face was uplifted to mine, and in her dark eyes was an expression of great wonder. Taking off my coat I enveloped her in its warmth, and giving her a biscuit to eat, I made haste with a fire, and prepared food, which I gave her sparingly, but often.

I could only read the story from the signs about the camp; but it was not an unusual one in the cruel and hungry Northland. The child, too ill to travel with, had been abandoned by La Marche and the mother to save themselves from starvation, for there was little evidence of food about the camp; LaMarche's hunt had been a failure, and the pair had fled before the avenger.

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Papita soon nestled into my arms and fell into sound slumber, and I held her there until the dawn of Christmas Day. I started early, little Papita packed in the caribou-skin and slung over my back. Never seemed a Christmas more joyous, as I gayly trudged over the mountain with visions floating through my brain of the coming reunion and the Christmas feast to properly celebrate the day.

I approached our cabin silently and was about to lift the latch, when Honoré's voice reached me :

“ O Mother of Heaven, upon this day hallowed by the birth of Christ, have pity and compassion upon my sins and give me back my child !”

And I made answer :

“ ‘ *Commit thy way unto the*

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Lord ; trust also in him ; and he shall bring it to pass.' "

Opening the door I placed the tiny bundle in the father's arms. Overwhelmed with the great joy which had come to him, tears rolled down his cheeks as he pressed the wee mite to his breast.

The story was soon told. Little Papita, now clothed in all the gorgeousness of beaver raiment and propped up on piles of furs, surrounded by the toys of Honoré's workmanship, prattled away in childish glee, while Honoré and I made busy in preparing a dinner which was to be a landmark in memory for the many strange dishes we served under familiar names, not forgetting a plum pudding, with wild cranberries as substitute for the raisins, and a spray of pembina to replace the holly.

Mamselle Jarbeau's Burglar

Mamselle Jarbeau's Burglar

APPOLION NANTEAU was the stone-breaker and shoemaker in Terre Blanche. He enjoyed only the same prosperity as falls to the lot of the ordinary laborer in that parish. He had inherited his tiny white-washed *cabane* and its tinier garden. His labor supplied him with the few necessities of life—the daily bread and the *graisse de roti*, the pea soup with its modest piece of salt pork, and tea; also a decent suit of clothes for mass-going on Sundays and holidays. Unlike his neighbors, however, who were all married, with numerous progeny, Appolion was a bachelor.

Mamselle Jarbeau's Burglar

Now old non-marrying bachelors are held in poor esteem by all the fair sex in Terre Blanche, and Apolion was no exception to this rule. Among the men he enjoyed a certain distinction. He could read, took a daily Quebec paper, and was somewhat of a politician. He had been known, even, to argue a question of morals with good Curé Saucier with much skill. He was further regarded as being somewhat revolutionary. He called himself a liberal, whatever that means. His occupation fitted well with his naturally indolent nature. From early May until the cold and snow drove him indoors to his shoemaking, Apolion sat under the shade of the maple that stood sentinel on the roadside at the top of the big hill that led from and into Terre

Mamselle Jarbeau's Burglar

Blanche, and plied his hammer upon the piles of stone gathered there to be broken up for macadamizing the hill road. It was a fine point of vantage. The village lay directly beneath, and the big river ran on and on until lost in the mists of distance. The cove which harbored vast rafts of pine from the Ottawa extended well into the little river. In the soft droning days of summer the c-r-i-c-k-r-i-c-i-c of busy axes was borne to Appolion's ears and the ye-he-yo-o as giant logs were turned over to receive their dressing. From the open windows of the convent school came the hum of children's voices at recitation, while from many open doorways the whirr of busy housewives' spinning-wheels and cradle-songs mingled through the day with the

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wild bird melody in the maple tree overhead. It was a spot to induce philosophizing and beget day-dreams. Appolion indulged in both when he was not otherwise engaged in discussing politics with M'sieu' Clarisse, who came often for that purpose, he being a stanch conservative as befitted his position as a *rentier*.

Those who climbed the hill on their way from the village found it necessary to take a breathing-spell at its top, and this also gave Appolion a breathing-spell from his work, although he was oft-times quite breathless before his auditor wished him *bon jour* and went on his way again.

Appolion had reached fifty when the calm placidity of his life was interrupted by the death of his sister and housekeeper. Im-

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mediately there fell a blight upon him. Man after all is a helpless creature without the good right arm of woman. Appolion's *ménage* went all awry. His pea soup was often burned now, and his loaf of bread grew stale and tasteless before it was finished. It was decidedly uncomfortable and dreary in the disorderly and lonesome little house. The tiny garden that had always blossomed with peonies, asters, dahlias, and hollyhocks was rank and choked with weeds. The bobolink that hung outside the door through the summer, Appolion gave to *p'tite* Zelia, a neighbor's daughter. It required all of his philosophy to reconcile him to life during these dismal days. He continued to pound away at the stones under the maple, but think as he might

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he could evolve no solution for his perplexities.

P'tite Zelia, in one of her wanderjahrs through the fields one morning, came upon Appolion as he was lighting his pipe for the fifth time.

"Bon jour, *mon p'tit choux*," said Appolion with a smile, for Zelia was an especial favorite with him.

"I don't like to be called that any more, M'sieu' Nanteau. Mama says that only babies are called *p'tit choux*. I'm not a baby, and you must call me *votre p'tite ange*."

"Oh!" exclaimed Appolion, "that's the way it must be. Well, *ma p'tite ange*, what brings you here this morning?"

Zelia, flattered, laughed, but answered Appolion's question by

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asking some others: "Do you like marguerites, M'sieu' Nanteau? I do," holding up a large bunch, "and I can tell your fortune with them, too. Would you like me to tell your fortune?"

"Yes, most certainly, *ma p'tite ange*," replied Appolion.

Zelia came close to Appolion, seated herself on the last fresh mound of broken stone, and with much deliberation selected the largest and fullest-petaled daisy from her bunch, and holding it before her, said: "Now, you mustn't laugh, M'sieu' Nanteau, because that spoils the charm."

"I'll be as serious as a crow," answered Appolion.

"She loves you," pulling off a petal, "she loves you not," pulling off another, and so on until the last one, "She loves you.

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Ah! ha!" cried Zelia, bobbing her wise little head exultingly, "she loves you, M'sieu' Nanteau."

"Who is she, *ma p'tite*?" asked Appolion.

"*Ma p'tite ange*, don't forget, M'sieu' Nanteau, or I won't tell you."

"*Ma p'tite ange*, then, who is this she?"

"Why don't you know, M'sieu' Nanteau?"

"How can I know when you haven't told me?" said Appolion.

"Well, then, it's Mamselle Jarbeau," and Zelia went into fits of laughter.

"Mamselle Jarbeau," sniffed Appolion, "and what put that into your head, *stupide*?"

"*Ma p'tite ange*, you mean, M'sieu' Nanteau. Well, I heard mama tell Madame Sylvain last

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night that it was a pity you didn't catch that old cat, Mamselle Jarbeau, and tame her, and that she would soon sing a different tune after you had cut her claws. Madame Sylvain said she thought Mamselle Jarbeau would do some scratching before she was caught, but if any one could tame her she thought you could, and it would be a good thing for you, too. Do old maids have to be tamed and have their nails cut, M'sieu' Nanteau, when they get married? I'm not going to be an old maid. Old maids are tiresome. If I stop to look over Mamselle Jarbeau's fence, she always calls out to me, 'Well, what do you want?' and I run away. Do you think you can tame her, M'sieu' Nanteau?"

But this sudden opening of a new world of ideas to Apollion

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paralyzed his speech, and he sat there staring into Zelia's face with such a foolish grin upon his own as to send that young lady into peals of laughter. This roused Appolion to say: "*Tête singe*, if you don't run away home after all that nonsense, I'll come for that bobolink this evening."

And Zelia, afraid to lose her bird, scurried down the hill and across the fields as fast as her short legs would carry her.

When Urbain Clarisse came puffing up the hill a half-hour later for his usual political argument, he found Appolion still sitting idle under the maple with his mouth open and staring into vacancy. So preoccupied was he that he virtually admitted the force of his opponent's arguments by several times saying, "*C'est correct*," but

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when Urbain brought his final clincher and Appolion's reply was, "*C'est drôle Ça,*" Urbain stalked off in disgust, muttering under his breath, "Bah! this Appolion is a fool; he has gone *craqué.*"

Mamselle Jarbeau and marriage continued to occupy Appolion's thoughts for the remainder of the day. Not that Cupid, in the disguise of Zelia, had suddenly transfixed him with a dart and sent a convulsive wave of love surging through his heart. Appolion and Cupid had not even a chance acquaintance. It was the vista of well-cooked meals, the most imposing house in Terre Blanche, an independence from all further labor, that suddenly opened before Appolion. It was true Mamselle Jarbeau bore no character for amiability, while her

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appearance, if not actually forbidding, was at least far from attractive. But she was rich. Apolion's eyes, for the rest of the day, when raised from his work, sought the sumptuous dwelling of Mamselle Jarbeau with a certain light of satisfaction; but whenever Mamselle herself appeared in her garden, tall, erect, and severe in manner, dressed in the half-masculine attire that she affected, Apolion winced, and his heart sank within him. "This matter must be well thought out," said he to himself. The capture and taming of Mamselle Jarbeau was no task to be entered lightly upon. Had he not overheard Dery, a few days before, telling the Englishman that "Mamselle was ver queer ole gal, wicked lak de debbil, an' wan she go on her bed on

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de night tam she 'ave two pistil onder her pil'. Any man wat brok troo her 'ouse ave mooch troub' an' get kill for sure." This conquest of Mamselle Jarbeau must be by cunning siege or a bold assault on the citadel of her affection.

Appolion's behavior for several weeks thereafter, if it did not indicate a man in love, was otherwise suspicious. After dark he would pace back and forth before the Jarbeau house, peering into the windows. Once, while he was standing at the fence gazing into the back kitchen, Mamselle came suddenly upon him. Appolion managed to stammer out a *bon soir*, *Mamselle*, but not before she had shut and bolted her door for the night. Like a cautious general, Appolion was only surveying the

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field of coming action, but as yet dared not advance his forces until the strength of the enemy was further revealed.

Madame Tardif, Zelia's mother, watched Appolion's proceedings with amused interest. "He will succeed yet," said she to herself, softly laughing.

One day Appolion went to Quebec, and there he met some convivial friends. They joined forces to such good purpose that when they separated later in the day they exemplified that excellent motto of the United States, "United we stand, divided we fall," but Appolion once in his cart was safe, for his old Belle mare was accustomed to these periodic town vagaries of her master and governed herself accordingly by going quietly home of

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her own accord while Appolion slept serenely through the journey in the bottom of his cart. Somewhat refreshed by his long nap, and braced by another pull at a small flask he carried, Appolion upon arriving home, felt himself in condition for adventure. His thoughts turned to Mamselle Jarbeau. Why not try his fortune then and there. He would, and she must succumb to his advances. So he took another pull at the flask and sallied forth full of the courage of conquest. There was no hesitation upon his part. The castle must be stormed and captured at once. He rapped three great double raps upon the knocker of Mamselle Jarbeau's door. There was no response. Again he rapped. Still no one answered. "She is out," said

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Appolion to himself, "but I will go in and await her coming." He opened the door, stumbled into the darkened house, found his way into the parlor, and sank into a chair. The monotonous tick, tick of a big clock but emphasized the stillness of the room. From somewhat disjointed thinking Appolion fell to dozing, and from dozing into sound slumber.

Mamselle Jarbeau, returning home somewhat later, locked and barred the door for the night, took the candlestick from the hall table, and marched upstairs to her bedroom.

The two "pistil" were carefully placed under the "pil," the rosary was said, and Mamselle retired to her virtuous couch with no thought of the impending

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events so soon to follow, and she, too, soon fell asleep.

Now a chair, as we all know, however comfortable for a short after-dinner snooze, becomes full of kinks for a longer sleep, and begets restlessness, and finally wakefulness. About midnight Appolion half waked with a violently stiff neck, but quite forgetful that he was in other than his own house. He arose, stretched himself to take out some of the knots, yawned, and said to himself: "Ugh! I've been dreaming, I'll go to bed now," but with his first step forward he stumbled over a chair. This roused him somewhat, but the next instant over went a small table and its contents. The crash thoroughly awakened Appolion; it also awakened Mamselle Jarbeau. Appolion heard

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the latter jump out of bed, strike a match, a hurried scuffling of feet, and then a door at the head of the stairs opened, the glimmer of a light appeared, and Mamselle demanded: "Who is there? quick, or I will shoot."

Appolion had reached the hall, had his hand on the door-knob, but the door refused of course to yield. At the dread summons his hair fairly stood on end with fright.

"For the love of God, Mamselle, don't shoot! It's me, Appolion Nanteau."

By this time Mamselle was descending the stairs with upraised candle in one hand and a revolver threateningly extended in the other. "Don't you stir," said she, "or I'll fire. So, M'sieu' Nanteau, this is why you've been

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hanging around my house lately, but I've got you now, and I'm going to keep you."

Appolion's teeth were chattering in his head with dread at the end of this adventure. All sorts of fearful consequences confronted him. His able generalship quite deserted him at the mouth of that revolver and its resolute owner. He could only stammer out: "I call all the angels of heaven to witness, Mamselle, that I did not break into the house. I came—I came, Mamselle, to ask you to marry me."

"A likely story indeed, M'sieu' Nanteau, but I don't think you'll get any one to believe it," interrupted Mamselle Jarbeau.

Appolion, with the grotesque and forbidding figure before him, had to admit to himself, with a

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sinking heart, that it was hardly likely that any one would give him credit for any such desire.

Whether Appolion's statement lessened Mamselle's wish to shed his blood or not is uncertain, but she now ordered him into the sitting-room, and to seat himself in a chair while she took another one opposite.

"I'm going to keep you here until morning," said she, "then I'll hand you over to the constable."

Appolion shivered, but by this time his wits were alive again. "If you, Mamselle, will take me to Curé Saucier now, this dreadful mis—I mean this awful blun—what I would say is, Mamselle, that I love you, and—and I will marry you. M'sieu' le curé will understand."

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Who knows the innermost recesses of a woman's heart—what romance or sentiment may be hidden from all human sight or probing? Mamselle seemed to be considering for some moments, then she said, with decision:

“*Bon!* we will go. Put on your hat, M'sieu' Nanteau, and walk ahead of me, but not too far, and mind you, don't you attempt to run away.”

In Appolion's wholesome fear of Mamselle's revolver there was little danger of this happening.

Mamselle rang the door-bell of the *presbytère* with vigor. A moment after a window opened and Curé Saucier called out:

“Hello!”

“It's me, Father Saucier, and I've got a burglar.”

“But this isn't the lockup,

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Mamselle Jarbeau. Take your burglar to Le Fort, the constable," said Curé Saucier.

"But he says he isn't a burglar, Father, and that he can explain everything to you," replied Mamselle.

"Yes, Father Saucier, you know that I, Appolion Nanteau, am no burglar."

"What, you, Nanteau? Well, well, I'll be down in a moment."

As soon as the curé opened the door, Mamselle, still revolver in hand, marched the trembling Appolion into the house.

The absurd appearance of the couple would have sent a man less well trained than the curé, to keep his emotions under control, into fits of laughter. Mamselle still wore her nightcap, a jupon took the place of a skirt, and a man's

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coat but ill-concealed a night-gown beneath, while a pair of carpet slippers adorned her feet.

Appolion, cowed and crestfallen, with an abject fear of Mamselle showing in every line of his countenance, was such an absurd object that the curé felt himself at last fully revenged upon Appolion for having ventured to argue morals with him.

“Now, Mamselle, put that revolver down, please; it makes me nervous. And what is the meaning of this visit?” demanded the curé, with what gravity he could command.

“She says I’m a burglar, Father; I, who want to marry her,” blurted out Nanteau.

“Oh! I see. Mamselle accuses you then of trying to break in upon her affections, and,” gazing

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somewhat fixedly at Mamselle, "some people might consider this in the light of a crime, but not the law," said the curé.

"What," exclaimed Mamselle Jarbeau, "not for a man to be caught in a single woman's house after midnight?"

"Most highly improper, of course," replied the curé with a twinkle in his eye, "and it might give rise to scandal; but such conduct is criminal only in the eyes of the Church, Mamselle."

"But I didn't bring him there, Father; I found him there."

"I am afraid you might find it difficult to make people believe it," dryly observed his reverence. "Come, Nanteau, explain this mystery."

Whereupon Appolion, with many protestations as to the inno-

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cence of his motives, related the occurrences of the night, ending by declaring that he was ready to marry Mamselle at once.

"Me marry?" said Mamselle Jarbeau. "Why, I never thought of such a thing, Father."

"More than likely," replied the curé; "but the experience of this night, Mamselle, must have shown you the danger of living alone."

Mamselle rather sniffed at this, and would have answered, but the curé continued:

"What you need, Mamselle, is a protector, a husband, a good, steady man like Appolion here, who has shown his bravery to-night in so conspicuous a manner."

Appolion wondered whether this speech of the curé's was to be

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construed as a compliment to his courage in aspiring to Mamselle's hand or was a bit of sarcasm leveled at him for having been marched away at the mouth of a revolver.

Mamselle evidently chose the latter view of the case, and grimly smiled.

"To-morrow," went on the curé, "you will go with me to the city, Appolion, for a special dispensation from the banns and for a license. And you, Mamselle, will be ready to be married the following morning."

"But, Father, it is all so sudden," said Mamselle, evidently weakening.

"You have both wasted many years, and now there is no time to be lost. Let it be as I say," replied the curé. "Appolion, you

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will escort Mamselle home," and, handing him the revolver, "take this for Mamselle's protection, and see to it that there is no other burglar in the house. I wish you both joy and good night."

The next morning as the curé and Appolion passed on their way to the city, Madam Tardif caught sight of them. She laughed aloud. "The taming of Mamselle Jarbeau has already commenced," said she to herself.

The Tragedy of Anse aux
Canards

The Tragedy of Anse aux Canards

AFTER allowing a good half-gill of whisky to gurgle slowly and pleurably down his throat, old Narcisse said:

“*Bon*, that puts the fire of life again into an old man’s heart. What was it that M’sieu’ wanted to know? The history of these ruins? Thunder of God! Such a story! If it was not for the *coup* I’ve just taken my old blood would creep again at the recollection, just as it always does when I wake in the night, and the east wind blows, and the surf booms upon the rocks off the point.”

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Here Narcisse went into a profound revery, during which I passed him my tobacco-pouch, from which he quite unconsciously filled his pipe, lighted it, and puffed away for a few moments, with no words spoken by either of us.

“Mysterious are the ways of God!” exclaimed Narcisse at last, through a dense cloud of smoke, and then another silence.

I saw that the old man was busy with the memories of the past, and I waited patiently.

He shifted his position uneasily once or twice, walked over to the little point of rock, gazed fixedly out across the Anse into the stormy waters of the Gulf, returned and sat down again, resting his elbows upon his knees, and

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holding his pipe close to his mouth with both hands, he began :

“ Child, boy, and man, I have lived at Anse aux Canards, never but once leaving it as you shall learn. My father and mother came from the Gaspé coast and settled here before I was born. Angels in heaven ! that was a long time ago. There were no neighbors nearer than sixty miles up the coast. My father hunted seals, netted the salmon at the mouth of the river, and in winter hunted caribou and trapped. Two or three times in the summer a trading schooner from Quebec dropped anchor in the Anse, and left us such supplies as we needed in exchange for our seal oil, skins, and salted fish. Twice in the winter, on his way up and down the coast, good Père La Branche

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stopped a night with us, heard our confessions and said mass in the morning, before continuing his journey in his dog-sleigh or on his snowshoes, as it happened. Otherwise than this we saw no one. The Labrador coast is a lonesome one, as M'sieu' knows, but we never complained of this. It was only when the seals were scarce or fishing failed that we grumbled.

“There were only two children, myself and a sister, and she died before she reached womanhood, and my mother soon followed her. My father and I stayed on, never thinking of leaving the only home we knew. When I was twenty-five my father died, and yet I remained here, following the old life. The captains of the trading schooners laughed at me for not taking a wife, but I

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knew little of the ways of women, and it was perhaps as well. I had been living alone five years, sometimes craving for some one to talk with during the long winter nights of fierce storm when there is nothing to do but hug your fire and think, think, until the madness that is always in your veins sets your brain in a whirl, and things for days become a blank. They say it is not good to live alone like me, and that men go *démenté*, though God knows more women suffer thus on our coast.

“ It was September, early in the month, but already the ptarmigan and hares were turning to white. Snow-squalls and frost had visited the coast. I had gone up the river to the big pool to bring down my salmon-nets; our rivers were not leased in those days to

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les Americains, but it is better as it is, and I am always glad to see you, M'sieu'. I was hurrying back, for I was daily expecting the arrival of the schooner Belle Isle from Quebec with my winter supplies. When I arrived at the top of the hill that overlooked my *cabane* I saw riding at anchor in the Anse a strange schooner, bigger than any I had ever seen before, and a flag with many stars and stripes was flying from her masthead. She seemed full of men, and some of them were lowering a boat. Presently this boat put off and made for the shore. I ran very quick to hoist my flag, and then waited on the beach in much wonder.

“ Two men only landed; one I knew to be the captain of the schooner from his appearance, the

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other a m'sieu' from his dress and air of authority. He was tall and dark, with flaming black eyes that ate into your soul and made you creep, with a mouth that snapped to like a mink-trap when he spoke. He was perhaps forty years of age, but I do not know; his hair was gray, but not the gray of old age.

"The captain spoke to me in his English, and I replied in French that I did not understand. Then the other, whom the captain addressed as Mr. Barlow, turned to me and said to me in good French:

" ' You live here? ' pointing to my *cabane*.

" ' Yes, M'sieu'.

" ' And alone? '

" ' Yes, M'sieu'.

" ' Are you much disturbed by visitors? '

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“ ‘Not often, M’sieu’; those who have no business here give our coast a wide berth, and those who have soon hurry away.’

“ ‘Who owns the land on the opposite side of the Anse?’

“ ‘The *bon Dieu*, M’sieu’.

“ ‘No better title,’ he replied, with a curl of his lip.

“ ‘And your name, my good friend?’

“ ‘Narcisse Le Clair.’

“ ‘That will do, Narcisse; we will know each other better by and by.’

“ I was puzzled by this speech, but his appearance did not invite questioning. Instead of rowing back to the schooner they made across the Anse and landed. After walking about some time they drove some sticks into the

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ground, and then they were rowed back to the schooner.

“Immediately upon their arrival there was a great commotion. While some of the men busied themselves in making the schooner snug, as though for a long stay, others were lowering boats and loading them, and some were throwing overboard timbers of different kinds. I watched the work the long day, so strange and curious were all these movements. Everything taken off the schooner was landed near the spot staked off by the two men. No one came near me again, and I remained in ignorance of what it all meant.

“The following morning I crossed the Anse and found some ten or twelve men breaking out stone and preparing lumber, but as not a man among them spoke

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French I could only sit and smoke and watch. By and by the captain and Mr. Barlow came ashore, and the latter, after giving some instructions to the men, turned to me and said:

“ ‘ Well, my brave Narcisse, what do you think of this as a site for a house? ’

“ ‘ A house, M’sieu’, for whom? No one wants to live at Anse aux Canards.’

“ ‘ Perhaps not, perhaps not; but you will soon have neighbors, nevertheless.’

“ ‘ And might I ask, M’sieu’, who they will be? ’

“ ‘ Oh,’ replied he with a snap of his mouth, ‘ all in good time, my brave Narcisse,’ and he walked away to direct some of the men.

“ The season for trapping was now commenced, and I could de-

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lay no longer. The next day I set out up the little river to the lakes at its source. I was absent some three weeks. Upon my return I saw that the schooner had departed, but on the site staked out there stood a long low house and several large outbuildings, and smoke was curling upward from the chimney of the house. I had killed a caribou on my way down, and as I was all impatience to know my neighbors, I cut off some steaks as a gift and as an excuse for my visit, and paddled across the Anse. Before I reached the door of the house it was opened, and to my astonishment Mr. Barlow came out.

“ ‘Ah, my brave Narcisse, then you did not run away after all; but come in,’ and so saying he almost elbowed me into the house.

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“*Bon Dieu!* such a house. There were shelves and shelves of books in the room we entered, and above them every inch of wall was hung with pictures. The floor was covered with carpet, not like our *catalagne*, but thick and soft like a bear’s skin, and there were tables covered with ornaments, and soft chairs, and much silver on a buffet. Such things I had never seen before, and I stood there gasping like a fresh-landed salmon.

“ ‘And you have brought us some fresh meat. That is well, and now you will drink the health of your new neighbors,’ and stepping to the buffet, Mr. Barlow poured me out half a tumbler of whisky. ‘But wait,’ he added. ‘Madame would like to be present.’ Here he called out ‘Clare.’

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Almost immediately there entered the room a woman so beautiful that to me she seemed like one of those madonnas Père La Branche had once shown me pictures of in a book, but the face was sad, so sad I could have wept.

“ ‘ Clare, this is Narcisse, our neighbor, and he would drink your health,’ said Mr. Barlow in French.

“ Mrs. Barlow smiled and nodded. I thought I saw tears in her eyes, but I was too confused to feel certain, for the husband’s eyes were searching my very soul with a look that made me squirm. I could only stammer out, ‘ *Bonne santé*, Madame,’ and then I fled, and for days I did not return.

“ But the face of the sad, beautiful woman haunted me at all hours, and I fell into deep reveries

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as to the cause of their coming to Anse aux Canards; but I knew nothing of the world's ways, and could arrive at no answer to my own questionings.

“ Gradually my visits to the Barlows became more frequent, and when the Anse froze over I went daily to perform some service in or about the house, for all of which Mr. Barlow insisted upon payment, though I would have served his wife on my knees and without thought of money.

“ Mother of Heaven! she was kind and good to me. Our winters are long—God! but they are long sometimes, when you are left alone with memory. But that winter, to me, fled on wings. I did not fail to note, however, that Madame grew thin and pale, and her expression sadder, as the

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months passed by, and for this alone I grieved, and longed for the bright sunshine of spring, which I foolishly thought was all that was necessary to restore her health and spirits.

“ Mr. Barlow confined himself mostly to his books and papers, and paid little attention to either of us. I came in time to fear this man, who, when he did speak, did so in bantering tones and with quick, snappy speech, that took away my senses and left me helpless. To his wife he was all politeness, but in time I came to think there was devilishness in it, when it brought tears to her eyes and rage to my heart.

“ In May the ice moved out of the Anse, and great flocks of out-ardes made the water noisy with their honking. There were green

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patches on land, and the days were long and full of sunshine. One took a fresh hold on life with every breath. Mr. Barlow had gone for a walk one morning to the point, and I was alone in the house with Madame. She came into the kitchen presently, and I saw there was something unusual, for her face was flushed and her eyes were filled with a strange light.

“ ‘ Narcisse.’

“ ‘ Well, Madame?’

“ ‘ May I trust you in all things?’

“ ‘ Trust me, Madame! I would die in your service.’

“ ‘ Listen, then. You must aid me to escape from this dreadful place. I will die here if I am compelled to remain much longer. It is awful, awful! What have I done to deserve such a fate?’

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“ Her tears and sobs at this point so unnerved me that I, too, wept, and seizing her hand I kissed it and implored her to calm herself, that I pledged my life for her escape.

“ When she had recovered somewhat she told me her story.

“ ‘ I was twenty years of age when I became engaged to the man I loved, but my father and mother both opposed our marriage because my lover was poor, and they wished me to marry Mr. Barlow, who was rich and had a position in society. Finally I yielded to their repeated urging and dismissed the man I loved. My marriage with Mr. Barlow soon followed, and this was the end of all my happiness. He was insanely jealous, though heaven knows I gave him no cause, and

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tried faithfully in every way to make him a good wife. I did not love him, but this was my hidden cross as I supposed. Perhaps he divined it. We were at a ball, and among those present was the man I had sacrificed. We had never met since the day I dismissed him. All the tender memory of the old love welled up into my heart upon seeing him again. He came to me at the end of a dance and smilingly extended his hand, saying, "Mrs. Barlow, may I claim a dance for old times' sake?"

" ' With the old spell upon me I weakly assented, for I yearned to know what his life had been in the long years that had intervened since we had parted, and somehow a sudden burst of sunshine flooded my heart.

" ' We danced but part of a

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waltz, when he suggested a walk through the conservatory. I do not know how long we remained there, for he had much to tell me of his life in the West, but he was still unmarried.

“ ‘ It was the voice of my husband that interrupted our conversation. “ Ah, Mr. George, how do you do? Clare, my dear, I fear that in the pleasant company of an old friend you have forgotten discretion; the temperature of the conservatory is not good for you. Clare, Mr. George, is so sensitive to changes. You will let me, my dear, conduct you back to the ballroom.” He said not another word, but led me away, after slightly bowing to Mr. George. I was too confused and terrified to say anything, for I felt that I should be made to suffer in

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some way for my indiscretion. He, however, made no allusion to the matter for days, and I began to hope he had overlooked my offense, if offense it was, but I was mistaken.

“ ‘ While at breakfast one morning he looked over his paper at me and said, “ Clare, you may announce to your friends that we will leave Boston in a few days for an extended cruise in Northern waters, and that our address will be uncertain.” I knew my punishment had come, though I little suspected the form it was to assume. Some ten days later we boarded the schooner at Portland, which brought us to this place. I was kept in profound ignorance of my husband’s intention, and supposed our stay here was to be of a few weeks’ duration only. This

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morning he informed me he had decided to remain at least another year, perhaps longer. It is his fiendish cruelty, his desire to make me suffer, and the satisfaction which it affords him, but I have suffered all I will, and it is he who drives me to do what I intend.

“ ‘ I want you, Narcisse, to give this letter to the captain of the first trading schooner that puts in to Anse aux Canards and ask him to mail it from Quebec. Whenever the answer comes you will give it to me, and be prepared to aid me.’

“ I promised, and no more was said then, as we saw Mr. Barlow returning to the house.

“ The Belle Isle was the first schooner to put into the Anse, and to Captain LeGrand I gave the letter just as he was upon the

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point of sailing, with many injunctions of caution. He was filled with curiosity to know more about Mr. Barlow, who had purchased so largely of him, and had given him orders for such strange things to be brought down on his return trip; yet this Mr. Barlow had never asked him into his house to drink his health even, though he paid like a gentleman. ‘*Sacrebleu, mon ami* Narcisse, you may depend upon it your neighbor is hiding from justice.’ I did not enlighten him on this point, but took my departure.

“ I was sitting before my *cabane* one morning early in August, when looking up from my work I saw the schooner La Tartare sailing into the Anse. I knew her captain well, and when he came

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off in his boat I went down to the beach to meet him.

“ ‘ *Bien*, Captain Trudeau, another cargo of fish for Quebec? ’

“ ‘ No, my good friend Narcisse, I’m looking for another sort of cargo this time.’ Here he dug me in the ribs and winked knowingly.

“ I knew at once what he meant, so I led him aside where we could converse without being overheard by his men.

“ ‘ You have brought news,’ I said.

“ ‘ I have brought more than that, *mon ami*, and with your help I’ll take more away. Aboard my schooner is a brave m’sieu’ who is all anxiety for the success of our mission and news of a certain lady we are to assist. You are to give her this note, Narcisse, and tell

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her to be at the point between ten and twelve to-night. You will say to Madame's husband that La Tartare has put in here to await the Belle Isle to exchange cargo, you understand.'

"As soon as he had gone I crossed the Anse on my mission. Mr. Barlow was impatiently pacing up and down before his house.

" 'What schooner is this, Narcisse, and what does she want here?' he angrily asked.

" 'That, M'sieu', is La Tartare, a noted smuggler. She is awaiting the Belle Isle to take on a cargo of whisky from St. Pierre for Quebec.'

" 'I wish they would find some other place to rendezvous,' and with this he went into the house.

" Madame was all nervousness, but I found a chance to deliver the

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note and the message, with a few words of courage, and promised to be on hand to guide her safely to the point.

“ ‘ Am I doing right, Narcisse?’

“ ‘ God must be the judge, Madame, for you in this matter,’ I answered, and as my heart was heavy I hurried away.

“ Late in the day I went off to the schooner. Mr. George met me in the cabin, seized my hand, and warmly thanked me for all I had done.

“ ‘ I intend, Narcisse, taking Mrs. Barlow to friends who will know how to protect her in future from this crazy husband of hers, for crazy he must be. God! that we shall never know the happiness that might have been ours! Now I can only show her that my love was true and faithful through all.

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And you, too, my good Narcisse, for I see by your tears that you, too, love and pity her. There, go along and we will meet to-night.'

" Captain Trudeau was on deck when I came from the cabin and growled out, ' Bad weather not far off. We will do well to be out of this as early as possible to-night.'

" '*Mon cher capitaine*, I don't know about to-night, but I am certain a storm will break to-morrow morning, and I will be in the midst of it.'

" Captain Trudeau laughed.

" He was right, however. When I again crossed the Anse the night was black and the wind was moaning over the point. I waited close to the kitchen door of the Barlow house, and when it silently opened I was at Madame's

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side in an instant. We hurried to the point where the boat awaited us. A tall figure rose out of the darkness and extended a hand to Mrs. Barlow, saying a few words in English. She gave a little sob, threw her arms around my neck, and kissed me on both cheeks. A moment later and they were lost in the night. I heard the anchor being hoisted and the sails set on the schooner, and all was still but for the moaning wind.

“God, such a storm as soon broke! I sat the rest of the night and prayed and shivered, as the wind and rain lashed my *cabane*.

“It was a little after daybreak when there came a fierce pounding on my door. I opened it, and Mr. Barlow, drenched with rain, but with a fierce light burning in

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his eyes that terrified me, stood before me.

“ ‘ You damned scoundrel ! ’ said he. ‘ You have helped my wife to escape, and I would kill you where you stand, but I’ve use for you. Don’t remain there gasping, but out of this and get the whaleboat rigged, for, by heavens, I’m going to follow the schooner.’

“ ‘ But in such a storm, and whither, M’sieu’ ? ’

“ He made as though to strike me. ‘ No words, but do at once what I tell you or—’ He did not finish the sentence, but his looks did, and I hastened to do his bidding, he feverishly helping and execrating me for all the devils in hell.

“ We nearly swamped going over the bar, and with scarce a rag

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of sail set we flew up the coast before the gale. Mr. Barlow bailed while I managed the boat, but no word was spoken. As night drew on and no sign of the schooner, the necessity for seeking shelter became apparent to even this crazy man, and he ordered me to find a cove to run into. I knew nothing of the coast except from hearsay, but kept a keen lookout, and finally saw Isle au Bout, which guards the mouth of the river Au Sable. I ran the boat into its mouth just at dusk.

“I made a shelter with the boat-sails and a fire at which to warm ourselves. The gale instead of decreasing worked up into a tempest early in the night. Mr. Barlow, exhausted, had fallen into a deep sleep, but I knelt

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and prayed for the safety of the two in deadly peril.

“ About midnight I plainly saw the faint flash of a vessel’s light beyond the point. Again it appeared, but nearer. Blessed angels of heaven! the schooner, and rushing blindly upon the rocks. I seized a burning brand from the fire and stumbled my way to the shore. Again and again I waved my torch over my head, but I saw or heard nothing more. In an agony of fear I sank upon the rocks. The terrible blackness of the night rendered me powerless to extend aid, even were it not already too late.

“ I remained there in all the storm, crouching behind the rocks for shelter from the wind, until daylight, when I hastened up the beach. There was no sign of

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the schooner, but I soon came upon some wreckage, and not far off the body of a boy whom I recognized as the son of Captain Trudeau. A few hundred yards farther on, amidst a great mass of wreckage, there lay the bodies of the two who, separated in life, now locked in each other's arms, were united in death. I fell upon my knees beside the dead woman and kissed the cold lips that had so short time before pressed my cheek. I thought quick at that moment. Mr. Barlow should never know of these two dying together. I would bury them as they had died. Like a man possessed, I dug a grave in the sand with a piece of the wreck, and saying a hurried prayer for the repose of the souls of the dead, I hastily covered the bodies, removing all

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trace of my work except for a rude cross of stones which I placed flat on the sands above the grave. M'sieu', my heart lies buried in that grave, but I live on. It is God's will."

Narcisse rose and knocked the ashes out of his pipe. "The tide is rising, M'sieu'; it is time we were off."

"And Mr. Barlow," I exclaimed; "what of him?"

"They took him to Quebec, M'sieu', quite crazy, and ever calling to his wife to save him."

At St. Therese

At St. Therese

AMONG the families of the guides and canoemen which inhabited the four or five little log cabins that perched on the mountain-side above the brawling St. Therese, he was familiarly known as Prince Rollo. He was always more formally addressed as M'sieu' Rollo, for though a prince in his own right of American citizenship, yet when he traveled abroad he sank his title in the incognito of plain Mr. Rollo. François and Pierre and their families were not, however, to be deceived by so transparent a disguise. None other than a prince could be such a royal dispenser of luxuries

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among them. Ah! but he was both good and generous, this Prince Rollo! When St. Therese gathered together to *veillée* of a long winter's evening, much speculation would be indulged in as to the contents of the great box that Prince Rollo was so certain to bring with him when he came to fish in the spring; that magic box than from which no conjurer ever produced so many and such beautiful things for every member of the community, not even forgetting the latest arrivals—there were always rattles and tooth-cutting rings for these unknown comers.

François Ceras would end the discussion by exclaiming, “In the name of God, but the Prince must be certain to have good fishing when he comes again!”

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And the others would fervently answer, "In the name of God he shall!"

Curious things were sought for, and still more curious things were wrought from bark and wood for Prince Rollo to take home again in the magical box, until in time that home in a far-away state became a veritable museum of curiosities.

To Prince Rollo, St. Therese represented the great blessed thing in life—rest. For one short month of the year the heavy burdens and responsibilities of a busy man dropped from his shoulders, and he gave himself unreservedly to nature and fishing, and the intercourse with the delightfully simple and primitive people who were all so fond of him. Before he fairly realized it, his weariness

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slipped away from him; his pessimism disappeared before the cheerful optimism of St. Therese; his step grew springy and elastic, and his spirits rose to boiling point.

Such days there were of fishing in the rapids with François and Jacques Beaulieu as his canoemen, such symposiums at his camp-fires on the shores of the sweetest of all sweet lakes, the little Evangeline, that nestled among a labyrinth of mountain-tops, when *mon oncle* Pierre Gausin told his stories of the *loup garou* and *la jongleuse* with that rare dramatic skill that comes of long practice; and then Pierre's nephew, Calixte, sang those old French songs that have echoed down the centuries among the Canadians. The Prince would sing "Ma Normandie" in his

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sweet tenor until the tears came to the eyes of Pierre and Calixte, though the old Normandy of France was but a tradition with them, but the air and words are full of a tender pathos. And Pierre and Calixte never tired of hearing the poem of "Evangeline" read to them in the French of Pamphile LeMay. When the reading, however, came to an end for the evening, *mon oncle* Pierre and Calixte would retire into the shade of the forest to repeat the long *chaplet*. While they were at their devotions the Prince, after lighting a cigar, would stroll down to the lake, and sitting there in the moonlight, dream such pleasant dreams that his heart would quite overflow and a great peace take possession of him, which was not

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like unto anything else in the whole world in sweetness.

Which leads me to my story; for what I have already related is only the prelude that carries the air, to use a musical phrase.

The Prince set his rod down carefully in the canoe, for the sun, climbing over the mountains, had flooded the placid lake in a liquid golden light, and the trout had ceased to rise.

“Now, Calixte,” said he, “we’ll tie up under that big birch and have a smoke while we wait for the wind.”

Calixte did as he was directed.

The full beauty of late May was upon all the mountain-sides. Maples in half-open leaf of many reds blended with the birches in their delicate yellow-greens, while about the lakeshore the wild

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cherry and *poire* were in masses of white flowers. From many spruce-tops came the call of little "white throat," the sweet—sweet—Canada—Canada. The Prince was silently happy.

It was Calixte who, after somewhat noisily knocking the ashes from his pipe against the canoe's side to attract the Prince's attention, thus delivered himself:

"It is a good thing, is it not so, M'sieu' Rollo, for a man to have a wife and family?"

Calixte laid particular stress upon "a man." He was just twenty-one, with a downy mustache.

The Prince, awakened from his reverie, turned slowly in Calixte's direction, with just the faint tremor of a sad little smile at the corner of his mouth. The ques-

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tion had recalled a sad period in his early life, but he replied cheerily enough, "It all depends, Calixte, upon the kind of wife and the size of the family. Are you seriously thinking of the widow Ledroit, with her fourteen children?"

"Heaven defend me, M'sieu' Rollo, but what put that idea in your head? Do you think I want to live on blueberries and spruce-gum until I die?"

"I couldn't say, Calixte; when a young man's thoughts turn to love and marriage in the spring, he isn't responsible for what he does. I dare say now it's Amanda Léveillé."

Amanda was a grim-visaged old maid who lived on the border of St. Therese.

Calixte almost choked with in-

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dignation. “*Bon Dieu!* M’sieu’ Rollo, but you think I have gone *démenté*. That one, indeed! Why, I might as well think of marrying my grandmother.”

“Well,” replied the Prince, apparently trying to rack his brains for the proper person, “perhaps it is a little black-eyed Noéma Ceras who is filling your mind with love and marriage.”

A great light of joy swept over the boy’s face as he answered, “You are right, M’sieu’ Rollo; she is an angel.”

“I don’t know that I said she was an angel exactly,” observed the Prince, “but I dare say you are right. All women are angels and men heroes during the lover stage of existence; but when once married, my brave Calixte, earthly angels and heroes no longer live in

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the air, or on it either, so how do you propose to manage to exist at St. Therese if Mamselle Noéma and you join forces for better, for worse? ”

“ We have thought of all that, M’sieu’ Rollo, but the *bon Dieu* will help us, and we have no fear on that score; but Noéma has another lover, M’sieu’, that big black Jacques who comes from Les Jardins, and because he has a farm gives himself the airs of a *bourgeois*. But he shall eat dirt. Yes, I say he shall eat dirt, even though Noéma’s father makes much of him. Bah! that Jacques is a pig, to come to St. Therese looking for a wife.”

The Prince barely restrained a laugh at this last unconscious thrust at the good people in St. Therese, but he consolingly said :

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“Courage, Calixte; no woman worth winning was ever won without a struggle. You must let me know, though, how it all comes on.”

A dark ripple upon the waters, stealing slowly across the lake, announced the sought-for breeze, and Calixte, pushing the canoe from under the branches, the Prince was soon intent upon the fishing, and the subject of Calixte's love affair was not further alluded to. It was not forgotten by the Prince, however, for a day or two before his departure from St. Therese he met Mamselle Noéma at the roadside spring, where, under an improvised shelter of branches, that young lady, seemingly in no wise cast down, was washing a length of *catalagne*

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in a tub and singing most cheerily to herself.

“ Good morning, Mamselle Black Eyes; you seem in great good humor. Is it because big Jacques is coming soon to carry you away from St. Therese? In that case,” continued the Prince, “ I shall miss the wedding.”

This occasional event was always set for the period of the Prince's visit to St. Therese. It was he who first signed the register after the bride, and danced the first dance with her at the subsequent festivities. If the births and deaths were not deferred until his presence in the parish, it was because of reasons quite beyond the control of its inhabitants, but always a matter of sincere regret.

The girl stopped her washing, and turning a blazing pair of eyes

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upon the Prince, stamped her foot angrily as she said: "You know, M'sieu' Rollo, I hate that Jacques, and it was not because I was thinking of him but of some one else that I was singing. Ah! you — you know very well. Sainted Virgin, but is it not sad that Calixte is not rich like that other? He is smart, though, is Calixte; and this winter he is going to take a contract to cut logs for the Englishman. He is worth two like that—that Jacques, who can only smoke and spit. As for me I hate him."

The Prince was in teasing mood, for he answered: "Well, Mamselle Spitfire, we have a saying, we Americans, that hate oft-times is the beginning of love."

"That may be so with you Americans, for you do nothing

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like us Canadians," replied Noéma, "but all the same, I'll die first before I marry that ugly Jacques."

The Prince laughed, and extending his hand to the girl, said: "Now I must say good by, little one; keep a tiny corner of your heart for me, and I'll dance at your wedding, never fear. And that Jacques shall eat dirt. Yes, he shall eat dirt," added the Prince, who just then recalled Calixte's expression. A day or two later, when the Prince and his magic box and other sundry belongings had been safely deposited on the platform of the St. Elmond station by Calixte, the two men stood sadly silent, the Prince thinking of the pleasant scenes just abandoned for the ugly cares of life so soon to be resumed, the other at

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the loss of the one who alone seemed to stand between him and despair in the success of his life's object. The whistle of the approaching train recalled them both to the present, and as the hurried good by was said, the Prince slipped a roll of bills into Calixte's hand with a simple, "Just to help along the lumbering operations this winter, my brave Calixte."

As the train started, the Prince caught a last sight of Calixte still standing rooted to the platform, with his hands clutching the roll of bills, mouth wide open, and looking after the train with a look of blank astonishment upon his face. And the Prince chuckled.

It was late in the January following that the Prince received a strangely addressed and still more

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oddly worded letter. It was signed Noéma Ceras; it read as follows:

“I have much trouble to explain that Calixte and his horse tumble over the big mountain. The horse he die, and Calixte nearly die, too, but he lives now with a leg broke. Angels of heaven! it is sad. That fellow Jacques comes very often, but I hate him. My father says I shall marry, for there are many children in the house. My father is very poor with children, and now there is one more. Calixte says he will go on the brickyards in the States. If he goes I will die for sure.”

The Prince was accustomed to dealing with the emergencies of life.

The following week Notary Planet, of St. Elmond, acting

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under instructions, appeared at St. Therese. He put up at François Ceras's. After his horse was unharnessed and a place found for it in the stables, the two men lit their pipes and stood around for the bit of confidential gossip before entering the house.

"Well, François, I've come to St. Therese, thinking that you might want me to draw up your claim upon the government for the ninety acres for the twelfth child." The Notary laughed.

"You are always welcome at St. Therese, M'sieu' Planet, but if you have no other business here this time you will have come for nothing, for the last is only the eleventh."

"So," said the Notary. "Well, it is fortunate I have some other matters to attend to here. The

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first is, François, you are shortly to have a neighbor. I have purchased the lot of land next to you, and will commence to build upon it at once. A fine place this for a summer home. You don't happen to know of a steady young man, with a wife, who would take charge of the place? I've been thinking of Calixte; but he's not married. Still, I suppose that could be arranged." Here the Notary dug François in the ribs and looked very knowing.

François forced a little laugh, but looked somewhat surprised at this sudden and unexpected declaration of the Notary. "I dare say you are right, M'sieu' Planet; we must think it over," said he.

Whereupon the two men entered the house.

What the Notary said to Cal-

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ixte was only confided to Noéma by the latter, who no longer spoke now of going to the brickyards, but occupied himself very actively in carrying out the plans of Notary Planet. A house and barn were pushed steadily to the finish. A horse and cow, several sheep, a pig, and some chickens were sent from St. Elmond by the Notary; and shortly before the breaking up of the winter roads four or five loads of furniture arrived, with a letter from him asking Mamselle Noéma to kindly attend to its arrangement, as he desired to give a house-warming about the period of M'sieu' Rollo's arrival, which would soon take place.

The girl was delighted with her task, and set about it with all the love that a woman feels for new finery. So much good taste and

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housewifery did she display that Calixte spent more time indoors in undisguised admiration of the worker than was altogether compatible with his outside duties. Big Jacques was not so frequent a visitor now at St. Therese, and hope was strong in the heart of youth, but the girl could not help wondering sometimes why M'sieu' Rollo did not answer her letter.

The day of the arrival of Prince Rollo, St. Therese was *en fête*. At the arch of evergreens which spanned the road, the entire population had gathered at the hour of his expected arrival. It was Prince Rollo who led the procession, accompanied by Père André, and followed by Notary Planet and a string of buckboards all heavily laden with boxes, among

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which the magic box was conspicuous. When the priest's blessing had been given, and the many warm greetings exchanged, the visitors first proceeded to François Ceras's. The Prince, a few minutes later, drew François into the spare room and held a hurried conversation with him, the precise nature of which was never disclosed, but when they returned to the others François had a hopeless grin of astonishment upon his face. Several times he made as though to speak, and as suddenly checked himself with a half choke.

"Now, Noéma," said the Prince, "I am all curiosity to see this new house of Notary Planet's. Come, we will go together."

After they had carefully inspected the house, and the Prince

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had expressed his approval and complimented the girl upon her skillful arrangement of it, she suddenly burst out, "Mother of Heaven! but one could be very happy here, it is all so beautiful."

"Do you think so?" interrupted the Prince, eagerly. "Let us call in Calixte and hear what he has to say." And going to the door he called, "Calixte!"

That young man responded so promptly as almost to lead to the suspicion that he was prepared for the summons.

"Mamselle Bright Eyes tells me, Calixte, that she thinks she could be very happy here, even with that fellow Jacques," said the Prince, looking quite serious.

"What?" said Calixte.

"Oh, M'sieu' Rollo!" said Noéma.

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“ But,” continued the Prince, “ she would no doubt be happier with some one else while that fellow Jacques was eating dirt. I believe, Noéma, I told you that he should eat dirt. Well, I don’t mind telling you both that he will commence at once. I’ve taken a fancy to do a foolish thing. You’ll both think so, I know, when I tell you that my answer to Noéma’s letter is a deed for this place to her, but it’s all upon condition that you are both married to-morrow, for I cannot afford to lose any of my fishing.”

Noéma and Calixte looked at each other, and then at the Prince, as though doubting their ears.

“ Yes,” said the Prince, “ Père André has a special dispensation from the banns, and the marriage

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cannot be postponed an hour beyond the time set."

"Is this all true?" said Calixte, anxiously.

"True as Gospel," answered the Prince.

Calixte threw his arms about the girl, and kissing her fervently, said, "The *bon Dieu* has answered our prayer, Noéma; the good Prince has helped us."

The Prince missed Calixte at his camp-fires that spring, but the fishing was never better. He still goes to St. Therese, and his own little log house, not far from the Calixte homestead, is much resorted to during the period of its occupancy by several small scions of the latter house, who find an unfailing source of pleasure in the magic box.

Two Old Soldiers

Two Old Soldiers

CAPTAIN LE GARDE was of the army that had fought under Maximilian in Mexico. Old and battle-scarred, he had come from Quebec to Terre Blanche with scant means to eke out his declining years. He boarded at the De Camps. Terre Blanche was much too concerned that summer in its struggle for existence, in the scarcity of work that prevailed, to give much thought or time to strangers. Captain Le Garde, therefore, went his lonesome rounds of the parish unnoticed and friendless. It was a sad time for him, for he chafed under this isolation from his fellowman.

Two Old Soldiers

One autumn day, as he stood on the bridge that spanned the little river, warming his old body in the bright sunshine, he saw coming toward him from the opposite side of the river a tall man with fierce, grizzled mustachios and goatee. He limped painfully. When he had approached closer, the two men seemed simultaneously to recognize the comradeship of arms, and both gave the military salute.

The tall man stopped and regarded the other somewhat critically. Then he said: "Comrade, thou art an old soldier; in whose service hast thou fought? I am Lieutenant Constant, late of the "Chasseurs d'Afrique." This last was said with an air of pride.

"And I," replied the other, "am Captain Le Garde, late of

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the army of Maximilian, of Mexico."

Hereupon they clasped hands in the warmth of sympathetic acquaintance, and fell into the easy confidences of old campaigners. The world, bounded by the horizon of Terre Blanche, was at last illumined in their sight.

"Hein! but it is good to meet an old comrade; it has been very lonesome here," said Captain Le Garde.

"Lonesome," exclaimed the Lieutenant, in a gruff voice, in which he manfully tried to stifle an emotion; "what knowest thou of lonesomeness, comrade, who hast not suffered loss of wife, who hast never had a wife's love? Ah! comrade, there are few on earth like my Lucie was; she is among the saints in heaven now." The

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Lieutenant raised his hat in silence.

Captain Le Garde did likewise, and then he extended his tobacco-pouch to the other: "We will sit here and smoke," said he, "it is warm and comfortable, and thou, comrade, wilt tell me of thy Lucie."

So the two old men sat there in the sunshine, and the one told the simple story of his love and marriage, and the happy years that had followed, until, both grown old and somewhat useless in the big world, they had come to Terre Blanche as caretakers for the empty house of the Englishman. Here his Lucie fell ill, though she would never admit it was anything serious. One night she awoke him, saying: "Thou wilt get up and light a lamp at the

Two Old Soldiers

crucifix, and then sit at the bedside where I can see thee. Norbert, thou art brave, for thou art an old soldier, and hast faced death often thyself, and seen others die. I am dying, Norbert, and thou must face the world alone. May God be good to thee." She reached up her arms and drew the rough old face down to hers, and kissing it once, twice, sighed gently, and her soul passed to God.

Both the old men were weeping now.

Captain Le Garde blew his nose vigorously. "Comrade," said he, "we will be friends."

That night Madame de Camp heard her boarder in his room singing "The Brigadier." "I am glad he is more cheerful," said she to her husband.

Two Old Soldiers

Life had again taken on an interest for the two old soldiers. In the sympathy of understanding they had found the balm for some of the troubles that afflict old age.

They met daily on the bridge, and if the day was cold they stamped up and down its length fighting over the battles in which they had taken part, or living the campaigns again of their youth or manhood. When the days were stormy, Captain Le Garde walked to the quarters of the Lieutenant in the house of the Englishman. There they smoked, and the Lieutenant would talk of his Lucie, for his heart was still tender of memories of the dead wife.

It was early in December that Captain Le Garde, coming from mass one Sunday morning, met the Widow La Jeune, and fell

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under the spell of her big soft brown eyes and the low voice with its pleasant cadences. Hein! though, this widow was a fool with her coquettishness that set other women against her, and the men against each other, and made her name a byword in the parish. I say she was a fool, for her ambition set no bounds to her man conquests, so the universal hatred of the women became her portion. It is not well to incur the animosity of all women. It left the widow defenseless, and finally drove her from Terre Blanche; but this is getting ahead of my story.

The widow dropped her muff.

The Captain, walking behind her, picked it up and restored it to its owner with a gallant bow, and a "Madame, permit me!"

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“ Oh ! thanks so much,” replied the widow, as she shot an appealing glance from under her long lashes directly into the eyes of the Captain. It was most deadly of aim, and the simple old soldier’s heart beat a tattoo upon the bosom of his starched shirt.

They walked together in silence until they reached the widow’s cottage. “ You will come in and warm yourself, and take a glass of wine with me ? ” said she.

The Captain found voice to stammer out, “ I shall have much pleasure, Madame.”

“ It is very lonesome in Terre Blanche,” said the widow ; “ there is no companionship,” and she looked questioningly at the Captain, who was seated opposite to her at the little table in the snug

Two Old Soldiers

parlor. On the table were a decanter of wine and two glasses.

The Captain, in the joyousness of the moment, was about to reply that life was never more pleasant, but a sudden flash of memory of some past dreary days led him to answer, "Really, there had been times when life had been most lonesome."

"But now?" queried the widow, with an engaging smile.

"Madame, in the sunshine of your presence life could not be other than pleasant," and here the old soldier raised his glass to his lips, adding, "Your very good health, Madame."

The widow laughed in her rippling way. "Ah! you men, a sad, sad lot. But you will come again, *M'sieu' le Capitaine*, and you will tell me of your battles."

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The Captain left the house swinging his stick and carrying himself with quite a jaunty air. He was even humming "*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre*." Madame Fardif, who had watched his departure, turned to her gossip, Madame Rancon, and said: "There goes another of the old fools, and he must be hard bitten, he is in such good humor with himself."

Lieutenant Constant paced the bridge alone that morning, wondering and somewhat impatient at the continued absence of his friend. Madame Sylvain, at the toll-house, finally taking pity on the troubled-looking old man, came out of her door.

"You are waiting for *M'sieu' le Capitaine*, is it not so?" said she.

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“ You are right, Madame; the Captain is late to-day.”

“ Little wonder, *mon ami*; he is only like other men I know, who think the joys of Paradise are concealed behind a widow’s veil. If you would find your friend you must look for him at the feet of Madame La Jeune.”

Lieutenant Constant, without a word in reply, strode across the bridge.

Sacrebleu! So his friend had become a victim to the widow’s wiles, and his life was to be wrecked to afford her an idle holiday. The old man stamped his stick with passion upon the frozen ground. “ But it shall not be,” added he to himself.

The following morning the Lieutenant, arrayed in his semi-military dress, his mustachios hav-

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ing a fiercer curl than usual, crossed the bridge, and walked directly to the house of the widow.

“ Ah! Madame,” said he, as the widow admitted him, “ I have come to you for sympathy and a chat.”

The widow beamed upon him. Here was another conquest, another tribute to her charms. She quite forgot the Captain. “ You are right in coming to me, Lieutenant. It is I who know what it is to be lonesome, and can sympathize with you.”

She brought out the decanter of wine, and the Lieutenant proceeded to make himself agreeable. Ah! he was so droll with his camp stories with their naughty flavor. The widow was in tears of laughter.

Here there was a rap at the

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door. The widow admitted Captain Le Garde.

“Ho! comrade, it is you?” said the Lieutenant. “I am glad to see you. Madame and I were having a laugh together over old times.” And without giving any further heed to the Captain he continued his attentions to the widow. He acted his part well. The widow was flattered; she had no eyes or ears for the Captain, who mostly sat silent and morose until his departure.

The Lieutenant came again; so did the Captain; but the former was all ardor, and the Captain furious. He sat and glared at both the widow and the Lieutenant; then he rose to take his leave. At the door the widow said to him, “You will come again?”

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“Never,” thundered the Captain, as he rushed away.

“Oh! fie, fie!” said the widow, as she closed the door, “how jealous you men are of one another.”

The Lieutenant could not repress a chuckle, and he, too, departed to return no more, but this he did not say to the widow. He quite forgot, however, the Captain’s anger toward himself. But as days went by and the Captain came not to the bridge, the truth dawned upon the Lieutenant. “He will get over it,” said he to himself; but the winter days were gray and dreary now without his comrade, and from very worry he took to his bed and sent for Madame Magloire to care for him.

So long as the Captain’s rage lasted his daily walks were in the direction away from the bridge,

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but he soon grew tired of nursing his anger, and sighed for a return to the friendship in which he had been so happy. He went to the bridge daily now, his old heart yearning for a reconciliation, but the Lieutenant came not. "He is still stiff," thought the Captain, "but he will come round yet."

And so the eve of Christmas came. Terre Blanche was aglow with lights and excitement preceding the midnight mass, that joyous event which, in a French village, transcends all others in the hearts of the people. The church blazed amid the brilliant decorations. As the Captain entered the sacred edifice the beautiful Christmas motto, "*Gloire á Dieu, paix aux hommes de bonne volonté*," stared him in the face. Its potent meaning never seemed

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so clear to him. He glanced in the direction of the Lieutenant's seat. It was vacant. The mass went on, but the Captain's mind was with his old comrade. He could scarce contain his anxiety until the first mass was finished and the benediction pronounced. Then he left the church.

The stars, and an aurora that spanned the heavens, lighted his road to the house of the Englishman. A faint voice answered his rap by saying: "Enter, comrade, and 'Glory to God and peace on earth to men of good will.'"

As the Captain stepped into the room, the Lieutenant, haggard-looking, but with a smile of sweetness upon his rugged old face, sat bolt upright in his bed. "Ah! comrade," said he, "I knew thou wouldst come this night that I

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might tell thee that what I did was to save thee pain and suffering from a woman's hands; but it has been lonely waiting, comrade. I feared to send for thee lest thou wouldst not understand. We shall be friends as before? " and he looked wistfully at the Captain.

The latter for answer stooped over and kissed the Lieutenant on both cheeks, and the silence of a great joy fell upon the two old men that Christmas morn.

Love Transferred

Love Transferred

I

IRMA sat on the little gallery of the house just outside the door. The last bell, preceding the commencement of the mass, had ceased ringing, and the late stragglers had all hurried by. She was quite alone now except for the bobolink that hung in the cage under the eaves above her head. It was full of love-song this beautiful morning, and answering song came from the fields across the road that were still yellow with marsh-marigolds. The joyousness of budding summer lay upon all the land in a soft, sensuous haze and an elusive fragrance of flowers and leaves and all green things.

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To the girl sitting on the porch, violently rocking backward and forward and chewing gum, with a heavy frown upon her face, the idyllic morn and scene was but an insult to her unrest and discontent. She was not at mass because her banns with Gaudiose Noreau were to be called for the third and last time, and the wedding would follow on Wednesday. It was simply hateful, thought the girl, that she should be hurried into marriage with Gaudiose just as Phillipe Chalon, her old lover, had returned from the States with every desire apparently to resume the relationship of former days. She contrasted the plodding backwoods Gaudiose, in his homespun suit and *bottes sauvage*, with the dashing Phillipe in the glory of store-clothes, a *castor*, patent-

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leather shoes, a massive gold watch-chain, and that impressment of the man who had seen the world, and it made her feel like—like doing something desperate, she hardly knew what. Her life now was to be a blank in a back parish, whereas with Phillipe she would take her position in Terre Blanche as the social equal of the wives of the notary, the advocate, and the mill-owner.

Backward and forward she rocked more violently than before, and her jaws were working like a trip-hammer on the piece of gum, but her eyes were staring into vacancy. She did not even hear approaching footsteps, but a well-known voice almost at her side brought her to earth again with a start, and a flushed look of joy in her face:

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“ Ah! Mamselle, looking more charming than ever,” and Phillipe gave a graceful flourish of his hat.

Irma gave her head a little toss as she answered, “ You are late in finding it out, M’sieu’ Chalon.”

“ Not so, Mamselle; only in making it known. But that is where that fellow Gaudiose has the advantage of me; he is cleverer, as you know.”

“ And better, perhaps? ” added Irma, somewhat defiantly.

“ Without doubt, Mamselle, but goodness and *bottes sauvage* go together; and how could it be otherwise,—one has more time to think and pray in the backwoods,” said Phillipe, with a malicious laugh, as he made a place for himself on the gallery at the girl’s feet.

The girl winced at this coarse

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home thrust, but she only replied by saying, "How is it, Phillipe, that you are not at mass this morning?"

"For the same reason, Irma, that you are not there,—a certain announcement that I do not care to hear until it comes from your own lips," replied Phillipe; then rising, he suddenly seized the girl by both hands, saying, "Is it still too late, Irma, to turn a pair of *bottes sauvage* away from Terre Blanche?" and he fixed the girl with a pair of ardent eyes.

She made no attempt to disengage her hands. Phillipe's firm grasp of them lent her the strength to answer: "I don't know, Phillipe; it might depend upon the pair of shoes that took their place, and what their owner meant."

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Phillipe lowered his face to the girl's until she could feel his hot breath on her cheek. "He means," said he, "that he will marry you if you will turn that fellow Gaudiose away when he comes to-day."

The girl seemed to consider for a moment before she replied: "I'll do it, Phillipe, for I've hated him ever since you came back."

"No wonder, *ma cherie*," said Phillipe, as he kissed the girl's burning cheek; "he is only a *habitant*," and Phillipe tried to look the superiority that he felt at heart over the unfortunate Gaudiose. "Now I must be off before the church people come along, but I'll be back to-morrow."

The girl watched him down the road with admiring eyes.

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“ Saints ! ” said she to herself, “ he is so *gentil*.”

When old Beaulieu, Irma’s father, had divested himself of his mass-going coat and collar and sat himself down for a quiet smoke while the girl was preparing the midday meal, she stopped in the midst of her work, and addressing him, said :

“ Were the banns called in the church this morning ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, it’s a pity ! Phillipe Chalon has asked me to marry him, and I have given ‘ yes ’ for an answer.”

The old man gave the resemblance of a whistle through his toothless gums. “ You’ve changed your mind somewhat late,” said he.

“ I have never changed my

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mind," replied the girl. "I have always said I would marry Phillipe if he asked me."

As old Beaulieu's interest in the rival claimants for the hand of his daughter lay in their ability to provide him a home, he himself looked with the most favor upon Phillipe, so he contented himself by simply remarking, "You must arrange this thing yourself."

"I am quite certain not to call upon you," said the girl, with an emphasis upon the "you" that left no doubt as to her meaning.

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II

Gaudiose Noreau, in blissful unconsciousness of what changes fate had in store for him, and with his mind filled with Irma and marriage, had spent the pleasant morning in a satisfactory looking-over his worldly possessions. Montagne d'Erable, on which Gaudiose lived, bears an unenviable name among the people who dwell in the rich valley at its foot. It is true that the outcrop of rock is always more in evidence than the incrop of grain or hay, but the cut of cordwood in winter made good to some extent the other shortages, and as happiness is not to be measured by mere wealth, but by the contentment with one's

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lot, the inhabitants of Montague d'Erable had no occasion for envying their lowland neighbors. Gaudiose was delightedly content with his survey of his holdings. His little house of squared logs had recently received a fresh coat of whitewash from chimney-top to foundation, and shone very bright under the June sun. The nasturtiums, in the lattice-inclosed beds alongside of the house, were well up, and would soon require training, but that would be Irma's work. If, as yet, there were few other plants planted in the little garden, there was a fine showing for a good return of carrots, onions, parsley, millet, lettuce, radishes, that are in such good demand upon the open market in Quebec on the Saturday; for since he had purchased another cow he

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would have to go to the market to sell his butter and the eggs from the hens. In winter, now, he could draw cordwood while Irma looked after the stock. There was no danger; she would find Montagne d'Etable a pleasant place to live in.

After an early and frugal meal Gaudiose made immediate preparations for his long drive to Terre Blanche. Several mysterious and fluffy-looking parcels were packed away in the rear of the two-wheel spring cart, then followed a large bandbox, which he handled as carefully as though it contained eggs. The horse was harnessed to the cart, and then allowed to graze by the house while Gaudiose put the last finishing touches to his toilet, coming out of the house a few moments later with

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such a shine upon his freshly shaven face that it might have been mistaken for the glow of satisfaction that lay at his heart.

Irma was alone in the house when he arrived, and his reception by her would have at once aroused the suspicion of a less obtuse man than Gaudiose that there was something wrong, but in the innocent simplicity of his heart, and with a smirk of much contentment upon his face, he produced the parcels and the bandbox, exclaiming, "There, Irma, is your marriage outfit. *Bon Dieu*, but it gave me much trouble to select it! It is fine, though; not such another has ever come to Montagne d'Etable."

She seized the box somewhat rudely from him, and opening it, extracted from its depths a hat

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which she held up in her hand at arm's length, and twirling it about with an affectation of scorn and contempt, thus delivered herself: "And this is what you call a hat, M'sieu' Gaudiose,—a thing not fit to cover a cabbage-head! Do you intend to set me up in one of your fields as a scarecrow? *Dieu défend* that I should ever sit at the altar-rail with such an affair on my head!"

Poor Gaudiose was stunned. He had given almost a day of anxious thought and worry in deciding upon this hat among the many gorgeous creations that had been submitted to him by the shopkeepers in St. Rochs, and he had laid unction at his heart that his final selection contained more various colors in it than any other he had seen, and was most *chic*.

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“Why, Irma,” he managed to stammer out, “the young ladies in the shop told me it was most beautiful!”

“Did they, indeed, and you were just fool enough to believe it? Did they also tell you that I would look most charming in this old bed-gown you are pleased to call a dress? And these shoes,” holding up a pair of rather clumsy-looking articles of footwear, “did you buy me these to help you plow with? Bah! a man who has no more sense than you have don’t deserve a wife.”

“Why, Irma, how can you say such things?” replied Gaudiose, somewhat feebly.

“Say such things?” said the girl, in a high-pitched voice, for she had now wrought herself up to a rage. “Well, M’sieu’ Gau-

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diose, I've more to say! You can bundle yourself and your outfit away from here as fast as you please, for marry you I won't, and there's an end of it!"

Gaudiose stood silent and irresolute as though doubting his sense of hearing.

"Why don't you go?" said Irma, impatiently stamping her foot. "I mean every word I say."

"But the banns have been called for the last time," replied Gaudiose, not knowing what else to say for the moment.

"Thank heaven it's nothing worse!" the girl answered. "Now go," and she pointed to the door.

Gaudiose in silence gathered up the scattered wardrobe. At the door he turned and would have

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spoken, but the girl anticipated him, and with finger still pointing at the door, she again said, "Now go!"

Gaudiose, with a dull sense of disappointment and shame at having been thus unceremoniously dismissed, bundled the wardrobe into his cart, and mounting to the seat, gave his horse a crack of the whip and rattled across the bridge and past the toll at such a rate that Madame Sylvain only reached the open door in time to see the cart going up the long hill; but she noticed the bandbox, as she had noted it an hour before going the other way.

"I wonder," thought she to herself, "if Gaudiose is eating oats?" which is our Canadian way of expressing being crossed in matters of love.

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III

“ Liza,” said Madame Aigral to her good-looking daughter, “ you will set the table again to-day at the roadside.”

“ But, mama, no one stopped to buy last Sunday, and it is discouraging.”

“ Nevertheless, Liza, you will try again; to-day it will be different, and the *croquignoles* are growing stale. Then, how are we going to pay for those cigars and tobacco if we do not sell any? ”

“ Mama, I will go to Quebec to service.”

“ Liza, never let me hear you say that again. No Aigral ever did such a thing.”

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“ But we must live,” persisted the girl.

“ The *bon Dieu* will protect us,” answered Madame Aigral, with simple faith in the all-providing care of the Deity that admitted of no further argument.

The little table accordingly was placed under the shade of the big willow, and invitingly decked with the wares likely to tempt the casual passer-by—a dish of *croquignoles*, a half-dozen doubtful cigars in a tumbler, some small packages of tobacco, a dozen sticks of peppermint candy in another tumbler, and several bottles of Madame Aigral’s home-made spruce beer. The girl brought out her rocker and placed it so that she could command the road and at the same time hold easy conversation

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with her mother through the nearest open window.

The road from Terre Blanche to Montagne d'Erable is never a much traveled one, but it was more than usually deserted this pleasant Sunday afternoon. Hope at first ruled strong in the heart of the girl, for Prudent Tranquille, passing early, had stopped to purchase a cigar and a cooling drink of Madame's spruce beer, while exchanging compliments with the daughter; but as after his departure several hours went by with no further sale to record, Liza's hope gave place to despair. Besides, some ominous-looking clouds rolling up from the east foretold a coming shower ere long.

"I tell you, mama, it is no use,"

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said the girl through the open window.

“Patience, my child; who knows what may happen yet?”

“It is always patience, patience, with you, mama, until I’ve no more patience left,” and Liza’s tones indicated the truth of the latter part of her statement.

Was it the simple faith of Madame Aigral, or simply fate, that within a few minutes after the above conversation between mother and daughter, Gaudiose Noreau stopped, and jumping from his cart, said somewhat abruptly to the girl, “Come, Liza, tie up those *croquignoles* for me; give me two or three cigars and a glass of beer”?

“You seem to be in something of a hurry to-day, M’sieu’ Gaudiose, and much earlier than usual in

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returning from Terre Blanche; but I suppose you were afraid of getting the bandbox wet."

"Hang the bandbox, Liza! I'm never going to Terre Blanche again!" blurted out poor Gaudiose.

"What?" said Liza; but some big drops of rain just then led her to hastily add, "Help me carry the table into the house, Gaudiose, and then bring the bandbox and parcels out of the wet."

When the house had been securely shut against the storm, Liza turned to Gaudiose, who was silently pulling away at his cigar in a corner, and said:

"So you are not going again to Terre Blanche?"

"No, never," replied Gaudiose in the voice of a martyr. "I've been invited to stay away. My

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outfit was not fit to dress a scarecrow with. Madame Aigral, I call upon you and Liza to judge whether such is the case," added he, in a passion, getting up and opening the bandbox and lifting out the much-despised hat.

Both women uttered a delighted "How beautiful!"

"Liza, you will put it on," said Gaudiose.

And Liza, nothing loath, stood before the little looking-glass and arranged it in the most becoming manner. When she turned a laughing face to her mother and Gaudiose, they were both filled with admiration.

"Hein!" exclaimed Gaudiose, exultingly, "does Liza look like a scarecrow, Madame?"

"She looks like an angel," replied Madame.

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“ Ah! Madame, you could better judge if Liza would also put on the dress and cape,” said the now proud Gaudiose.

“ You hear what Gaudisoe says, Liza; you will put on the dress and cape.”

When the girl returned to the room a few moments later, attired in the finery intended for another, she herself was pleased with her own appearance, and the heightened color and the sparkle in her black eyes lent an added charm to the *ensemble*.

Gaudiose was in an ecstasy of delight, and readily assented to Madame's invitation that he should take tea with them. He lighted his pipe now, and followed every movement of the girl with devouring eyes, as she glided

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about the room getting ready the meal.

When Madame, about nine, retired for her devotions, Gaudiose seated himself on the "settle" beside Liza.

"So you like the outfit?" said he.

"I think it's lovely," answered Liza, honestly.

"And it is so becoming to you," said Gaudiose, edging closer to the girl. "Say, Liza, will you take the outfit and me with it?"

"But, Gaudiose, you are eating oats."

"Well, I'm not going to eat them any longer if you'll say 'yes.' I've been a fool, Liza, but I am not an animal."

"Mama," called the girl, "Gaudiose asks me if I will take the

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outfit and him with it. What shall I say? ”

“ What will you say? ” queried Madame, appearing at the room door, rosary in hand. “ Why,” with great decision, “ you will say ‘ yes,’ and not disturb me again at my prayers.”

Some few weeks later, by one of those strange coincidences, two wedding parties met on the road. Madame Chalon (*née* Irma Beau-lieu) was resplendent in silks and feathers; but as Gaudiose turned to his wife beside him, a great wave of pride and contentment swept over him. She certainly looked very handsome in the “ outfit.”

The Apotheosis of Paddy
Larrisey

The Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

FROM whatever point of view you regarded it, our parish was a flat contradiction of all the laws which are supposed to regulate the coming into being of a community whose only means of subsistence was from the land. The elements physical and human were rugged and austere, with little to lighten the gloom of the fierce contest between them for supremacy.

A noisy, rapid-tossed river made possible a narrow valley inclosed with granite-ribbed mountains. A road followed the tortuous river windings, and the farms

Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

ran up the mountain-sides in three-acre strips, as was the custom of the country. As the valley became populated, settlement pushed over and along the tops of the mountains—wherever a foothold could be obtained. A worthy Scotchman was the founder of our parish, the government having conceded him a vast tract of wild lands in the rear of the old French parishes in the rich and fertile valley of the St. Lawrence River, and north of the city of Quebec. He had peopled it with all conditions and races of men, with the famines of the Old World behind them, and the land hunger of the New World in their hearts. Few of the settlers had been bred farmers, but were of many trades and occupations. Cast upon the wharves of Quebec with no capital other than

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sturdy arms and a numerous progeny, the offer of land for almost the taking was not to be resisted, and once in possession nothing could root them from it. Yet, every acre had to be reclaimed from dense forest, and gaunt hunger would have stalked in their midst before the settlers obtained a sufficiency from the soil to supply their wants, had not fish and game been abundant.

Spring came late, summer was short, and autumn merged quickly into the long winter of fierce cold and deep snows. We were forced to adopt some of the customs of our French neighbors, and our rude houses of logs, with few windows, kept out the winter's blasts, while the great oblong three-decker stove kept us warm. We dressed summer

Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

and winter in the *éttoffe du pays*, and we soon adopted the long beef moccasins for our feet. In all other respects, however, we clung tenaciously to the customs of our respective countries. We were as Scotch as a Highland glen, as Irish as Killarney, or as English as Yorkshire, and the dividing lines were but a line fence or a piece of bush. National prejudices and rancor were strongly implanted in us, and we made active contention to keep alive our ancient customs and to assert our dislikes. The dependency upon one another's good services in time of need or trouble might temporarily establish a truce to our hostilities in order that we might make cause against the common enemy, want and nature, but peace was never proclaimed.

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When Moriarty fell sick at the potato planting it was Black Gordon and his boys who put his crop in for him, and shortly upon his recovery gave him a beating at the end of a dispute over a line drain. Moriarty retaliated by pulling Gordon out of the river that winter amid the floating ice, to the imminent peril of his own life, and Gordon felt no coals of fire heaped upon his head.

When the entire parish took sides, and matters began to assume a critical aspect, the three clerical gentlemen who presided over the spiritual affairs of the people would suspend their own religious differences for the moment to preach a gospel of toleration and good will among men; this was most edifying to listen to, but somehow failed of its purpose

Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

in the crisis of a municipal election or a school-board meeting—for the same reasons perhaps that old McAnney failed to establish “pace” at such gatherings. He would skirmish upon the outer edge of the crowd with pockets well filled with stones, one of which he would let fly with telling effect whenever unobserved. The row then breaking out afresh, old McAnney would force his way into the thickest of the fray, calling out in indignant tones: “Pace, boys! pace! Remember wat the clergy do be after tellin’ us.”

Removals from our parish in those early days were rare. The pride of possession, and the attachment to the homes hallowed by the creation of our own hands and the sweat of brow, had set our roots firmly into the granite of the

Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

mountains, and we were not to be stirred except by the one great leveler—Death. It was a surprise, therefore, when Sergeant Robin Maxwell, late of her Majesty's 78th, announced to his neighbor, Sandy McAlmon, as the two toil-stained men stood leaning wearily over the fence that divided their land late in the day of a September plowing, that he was a-wearyin' wi' the struggle, and gin he could find a purchaser for the lan' he would 'een be a flittin'.

"Dods, mon," continued he, "a life o' sojerin' a'm thinkin' no fits a mon for farmin'. The soun' o' the pipes and the clank o' sword an' rifle are mair to ma taste than fechtin' wi' stumps an' wrastlin' wi' ploos. A claymore, Sandy, is handier in ma hand than ma ax."

Sandy was speechless for a time,

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regarding his neighbor as a man who had suddenly taken leave of his senses, and then he answered cautiously:

“A’m no sayin’ your no richt, Robin, but it’s a bonnie farm, an’ it’s a’ your ain, an’ you’r’ your ain maister.”

“Ma ain maister,” contemptuously replied Robin. “A’m a slave, an’ a’m driven nair to death in chains of ma ain forgin’. A’m gangin’ to Quebec, Sandy, to enlist the noo.”

The lurid flame of late sunset hung upon the mountain-top, deep shadows crept into the little valley, while the mists from the new plowed fields lay close to the ground, ere the two men separated, but Robin’s determination remained unshaken.

A few evenings later he jogged

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slowly homeward from Quebec in a beatific condition of mind and body, which proceeded from two causes: a Queen's shilling lay buried in his pocket, and a little brown jug was ensconced in a position of safety and readiness between his feet in the front of the cart. When he overtook Paddy Larrisey trudging along somewhat unsteadily under the double burden of over-indulgence and a sack of flour, he invited Paddy to a seat beside him.

The drive is a long one, the roads were rough, and the night grew dark and cold. At the turn of the road at Lee's corners a steep, unfenced hillside made a close turn a necessity. Robin had just handed the reins to Paddy, and the jug was being uplifted to his mouth, when old Bess, with a per-

Apotheosis of Paddy Larrisey

versity born of all her sex, deliberately went over the declivity, and men, cart, and horse rolled to the bottom in a confused heap.

It was Robin who first found voice. "Paddy," exclaimed he, faintly, "a'm 'een maist deid, but a keepit ma thumb i' the mooth o' the jug, an' if you'll cam to me, Paddy, and pull me frae the cairt, a'm thinkin' anither wee soop wod restore me."

"Holy saints!" answered Paddy. "Shure the top of the worrold's upon me, and the divil is pullin' at me extremities; if the angels of hiven can't get a lever to pry me out of his clutches, I'm afeared, Robin, man, it's 'deid' you'll be for want of a drap afore I'm able to hilp you." There was a confused sound of struggle here, and deep groans from Paddy, as

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old Bess, who had been lying atop of the Irishman, scrambled to her feet, and released from the cart, contentedly commenced to graze.

“Shure me heart’s dishplaced and me bowels is crushed by the dirty baste,” growled Paddy. “Robin, man, have you got your thumb in the nick of that jimmie-john yit? for be gobs it’s only me mouth around that same nick that’ll convinche me that me own’s sthill on me shoulders.”

“Ay, Paddy,” responded Robin, “but I’ll no tak ma thumb oot ontil ’am loosed frae the cairt. Ma heed’s a’tween the spokes o’ ane wheel, an’ ma two feet are tangled i’ the ither. It’s i’ the stocks I am, like the covenanters o’ old, but a’m thinkin’ nane o’ them e’er haud a jug o’ whuskey at his thumb aind. It’s a mercifu’

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deespensation o' Providence, Paddy, and as the Bible says—"

"Shure av ye's goin' to be dishputin' religion with me, it's divil the sthip I'll take to help you from your commernantin' position. It's sthrange to me ears wat your Bible says, but I know full well wat Father O'Brien will say to me for this night's doin's."

Robin extricated at last, the two worthies sat them down in the dewy grass amid the wreckage, and, after a prolonged gurgling observation of the stars through the little jug, proceeded to make a night of it. The mellowing influences of the common misfortune and that of the little jug established a bond of amity between the two, which soon led to mutual confidences; but it was Paddy who first voiced the

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troubles which were seemingly as canker at his heart.

“It’s tired I am wrestlin’ with sthumps and advershity. Whin hunger’s in your sthumack and hate at your heart it do be sore work. Faix, and its lopsided I’m growin’, Robin, with workin’ on the mountain-side, and me two eyes are cruiked with followin’ the road in the dark. Shure the tongue of me niver lied till I tuk to chantin’ the praises of me crops—which are mostly stones, by the same token.”

“Hoots, mon! why dinna you cam awa’ doun intil the valley?” said Robin, who now saw the chance for a purchaser of his farm.

“Kim into the valley is it?” sniffed Paddy. “Unless there’s an earthquake followed by a land-

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slide, or I kim into me esthates in Oirland, which the rightful owners are kapin' me out of, it's only the valley I'll see from me castle on the mountain."

"Weel, Paddy," responded Robin, "I'm thinkin' I micht sell the fairm gin I could fin' the richt man, an' I wud gie him time to pay for it."

"Troth, if toime will pay for the farm, Robin dear, I'm your man, so give us your fhist, and we'll call it a bargain," gleefully answered Paddy.

Robin failed to see the covert qualification in Paddy's ready willingness to take the farm, and the bargain was struck. The two men soon afterward fell asleep. Thus it came to pass that Paddy became the proprietor of Robin Maxwell's valley farm.

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Robin's rousin' (auction) quickly followed. The day after the rousin' the Larriseys moved down from the mountain. Biddy drove one horse before a rickety two-wheel cart, upon which was loaded the "childer," a diminutive pig in a crockery crate, and a dozen of squakin' fowl tied together in pairs by the legs. Biddy sat on the brace-bar of the shafts, bare-headed and bare-legged. Shoes and stockings were reserved in those days for church-going on Sundays, and then they were carried under arm until a close approach to the Lord's sanctuary gave warning that it was time to put them on.

Paddy followed Biddy in charge of the household goods, a load as light as the owner's heart this eventful day: one creaky

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wooden chair for Biddy's use, or for guest service, when it always received a hurried wipe from the hem of Biddy's petticoat, a great three-decker oblong box stove to stand in the center of the one living-room, a home-made rough deal table, two split balsam benches, the family chest, three chipped and cracked "chiny" plates and as many cups, a large iron teakettle and a pot for boiling the pig's and "childer's" potatoes, several patchwork coverlets, and some *paliasses*, to be filled later with straw for beds.

Young Jack trudged behind, driving the cows and the six months' old calf, which was possessed of an insane desire to bolt into every bit of bush, and which kept Master Jack actively employed.

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Mrs. McAlmon, from her window, watched the Larriseys' debarkation with a divided sentiment; pity for the ragged, neglected-looking children, and wrath toward the shiftless parents. Having no bairns of her own, she had taken those of the entire neighborhood under her wing, and in time they came to know her as "Mammy McAlmon." As became a Scotch housewife, she was orderly and thrifty, with little patience or sympathy for those endowed with less of these qualities than she herself possessed.

When Sandy came in from the choppin' that evening, and had scoured himself in the basin on the bench outside the door, Janet met him at the threshold with a big jack-towel. While he polished his face to a shining finish, Janet

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opened the pent-up floodgates of her disgust with the new neighbors.

“Hoots, Sandy! but you be queer fouk. Aboot an hour frae their comin’ Biddy came ben, and she sat her down, and I fair thocht she’d tak’ root. I heerd some o’ the bairns greetin’ wi’ hunger, an’ I speered her to gang awa’ to them, but she just said: ‘Shure, mum, the sand forninst the dure do be fine and clean, and it’s much like Indian meal, it is. The childer, God bless them! will soon have a foine tasthe for it. Is it the loan of a drawin’ of tay you could let me have, Mrs. McAlmon?’

“About two o’clock I pit some scones intil ma pocket, an’ I hied me yon, an’ Sandy, mon, ye’ll sair belie’ me when I tell you what I

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speered thro' the winner. Paddy and Biddy were dancin' an Irish jig to Biddy's liltin,' an' the bairns were haudin' their sides wi' lauchin', and not a thing touched in all a' the hoose.

“ ‘ Top of the day to you, mum, said Paddy; ‘ shure Biddy and I were tistin' the flure and cheerin' the childer up a bit. Jack, you red-headed omadhoun, rin down to the fince and bring up a good dhry pole to sthart a fire with, for it's a cup of tay you'll be after havin' with us, mum? ’

“ ‘ Mony thanks,' said I, ‘ but when I come to tak' tea wi' you, Maister Larrisey, I'll sen' you word I'm comin'.’ ”

“ ‘ Shure you'll be heartily wilcum, mum, to the best we have in the house.’ ”

Sandy, sparing of words,

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groaned an acknowledgment of all that his wife had said, and went in to his supper.

Paddy soon became a thorn in the side of thrifty neighbors, but his unfailing Irish wit, unvarying good humor, and wonderful power of mimicry, pulled him through many a scrape with a certain aplomb. The borrowing capacity of the whole family had no apparent limit; it certainly possessed no modesty. There was nothing they hesitated to ask for, and nothing was ever returned until sent for, and not always then. Paddy's fences were soon despoiled for firewood, and his horse and cow roamed at will. Old hats and wisps of straw replaced the glasses that were broken by the youngsters, and the barn door hung idly on one hinge. Paddy

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worked in a desultory way, but his luck, as he termed it, was always "agin" him. His neighbors, however, in discussing him, which was often, told a different tale, with many indignant or laughing comments, as they happened to view the particular case in point.

In the early winter of that year the smallpox raged with great violence in the French parishes to the south of ours. We quarantined against them with commendable rigor, and a passing French-Canadian received scant courtesy at our hands. Even the Indians from camps far among the mountains were invited to move on, while the dogs made noisy clamor at their heels. It was no time for ceremony or discrimination.

The night of the commencement of the great snowstorm,

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which is even now remembered because it blocked our roads for weeks and cut off all communication throughout the parish, excepting by the use of snowshoes, there came a knock at Anderson's door. Anderson answered it in person, and there stood little Joe Barras, looking like a snow-man, so covered was he.

"You giv me place for stay; ver' bad night, no can see road?"

"Not in the house, Joe; we don't want no smallpox here. Find a place in the straw in the barn; and, Joe, there is an old buffalo-robe on the battery floor to throw over you"—and Anderson closed the door on the storm and his unwelcome guest.

In the morning, when Anderson dug himself into the barn, Joe's snowshoe track led out of it.

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The children played there that day. One of them hid under the buffalo-robe that little Joe had used. Smallpox broke out in the house within a week, and ere many days threatened the extinction of the entire family.

No one ventured into the infected house. The stricken ones, including the mother, were dependent upon the half-crazed father for all the care they received. Two of the children died, and it was the father who was compelled to perform all the sad rites for the dead. Our hearts ached for him as we saw him pass with the two little rough deal coffins on the wood sleigh to the silent burial; but fear steeled us against exposing ourselves to the loathsome disease. We pitied without the tender of service.

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When Anderson from his door next day hailed a passing neighbor to say that he, too, was ill, we were paralyzed. Even Paddy Larrisey grew thoughtful, and for the nonce forgot his song and joke. In the evening he sat long with his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands, while Biddy moved about uneasily, but speechlessly, in an ecstasy of unknown fear. Paddy finally rose, and, without a word, put on his coat and hat.

“Where do ye be a-goin’ the night, Paddy dear?” anxiously inquired Biddy, who now found voice.

“To hivin, perhaps,” tersely replied Paddy; “but do you take care of the childer, Biddy, and God bless yis all.” And Paddy disappeared into the night.

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“ Oh, Paddy ! ” wailed his wife after him, “ come back, come back ! ” But there was no reply. As she stood straining her eyes into the darkness, there was a sudden stream of light from the Anderson house, and all was dark again. Her worst fears for Paddy were confirmed, and she uttered a loud cry of terror, which the “ childer ” in the house re-echoed.

Paddy’s greeting to Anderson was a simple “ Shure me heart’s bled for you, man, and I’ve kim to help a while; so into bed with you, and I’ll take a luk around.”

The state of things was about as appalling as the nature of the disease, but Paddy, ere the night had passed, in his rude way had restored some order, and the house became filled with the sunshine of

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his presence. In the days and weeks which followed, he labored incessantly, and with a devotedness and gentleness that endeared him to each suffering member of the household. In the long nights of restlessness among the children, he quieted them with wonderful tales of the good fairies. To the parents he was a ministering angel of hope. If he slept at all it must have been with wide-open eyes and sitting bolt upright in a chair, for he was ever ready upon the slightest call. He gave little thought to himself. Daily he appeared upon the little hill and shouted words of encouragement to Biddy, with many messages for the "childer."

There came a day at last when Biddy, rushing breathlessly into our house, said :

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“Faix, there do be a hilt doc-
tor out at Anderson’s, and Paddy
says he’s dishinfestin’ the house,
and Paddy’s kimmin’ home,
though the doctor do be tillin’
him that he must burn all the
clothes that do be on his back
before he kin lave. Troth, if he
do, it’s the quare soight he’ll be
rinnin’ thro’ the snow with only
God’s lither on him, for divil’s the
ha’porth ilse he’ll have, for Jack,
bad luck to that bhoy, cut off the
legs of Paddy’s Sunday pants.”

After much search we finally
overcame this difficulty in the way
of Paddy’s home-coming. It was
worth while to see him strutting
homeward, quite unconscious of
his heroism, but full of the impor-
tance of a pair of black pants, a
long-tailed coat, and an ancient
clerical beaver, with a three

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weeks' growth of scrubby beard beneath it. When we cheered him as he passed, he took it entirely as a compliment to his gay appearance, and gracefully touched his hat in acknowledgment, giving it a rakish tilt as he replaced it.

Moriarty, before the mass on the following Sunday, shouted out in the impulsive Irish way: "Now, byes, since Paddy's alive to die in his own bid, it's a sind-off we'll be after givin' him, and ivery man of ye's'll bring wan thing or the other to hilp him through the winter."

And they all replied, "Amin!"

At the kirk door McAlmon voiced the sentiment of the assembled elders when he said: "I'm no sayin' that Paddy does-na fash me at times, but his heart,

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ye ken, is i' the richt place, an' it's a braw act, an' I forgie him the past."

What Anderson and his wife said Paddy never revealed, but the greatest thrashing that Phil Muldoon ever received was at Anderson's hands, for some disparaging remark he made about Paddy.

The Story of Locksley

The Story of Locksley

LOCKSLEY came from the state of Maine, so he said, but beyond this item of news personal to himself, no one knew aught of his history previous to his appearance in our parish. Thereafter his doings were upon the tongues of many.

He was possessed of a grim humor, was Locksley, and one phase of it was to lend the idea to the simple-minded and superstitious settlers that he was in league with the devil. They accepted the situation with unquestioning belief, and treated Locksley with that respect due to so exalted, if doubtful, a connection.

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Summer and winter he wore a mink-skin cap, the head of the mink stuffed and looking up at a hen partridge just ready for flight which surmounted the crown. This was certainly picturesque and odd, not to say weird. He never wore a coat, but instead a heavy gray homespun wool shirt, worn outside his pants and belted around his waist with a twisted rope; in this belt he carried an ax. Caribou-skin leggings with the hair and soft moccasins completed an attire that would have caused ridicule, even in our unconventional parish, but for reasons which I have given.

Locksley owned two mongrel dogs of forbidding appearance. One he called Night, the other Day. They were his inseparable companions, as was a long single-

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barreled gun of wondrous powers. He had a cabin somewhere in the mountains, but he was restless, moving about the parish from house to house. No one refused him shelter or food; indeed, he was treated with a certain courteous consideration, for it is always better to placate the devil and his accessories rather than openly quarrel with them. Whenever Locksley took his departure, however, the good man of the house and his wife reverently crossed themselves and made haste to sprinkle holy water about the room. The children then came out of hiding.

This much, and some more, I knew of Locksley. The following interesting facts relating to his career I learned from little Spruce Gum (alias for Prospere Du-

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mont) and Phil McGinnis, while hunting caribou lately with those two worthies in the Laurentides.

Snow had fallen steadily all day, the snowshoeing was bad, and as the afternoon drew to a close I had settled into a stolid yearning for the flesh-pots and comfort of camp. When we stepped suddenly out of a balsam thicket into a small clearing with a disused log cabin in the center, I shouted: "Hurrah, boys! We're in luck. We'll camp here for the night."

Not a word in response, and as I turned to seek an explanation, I saw little Spruce devoutly crossing himself and big Phil was evidently mumbling a prayer. Both looked terrified.

"What the devil is the matter with you two—seen a ghost?"

"Sacre; no see ghos', but ghos'

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'ere all de sam'. Debbil 'ere too ver' mooch," said little Spruce.

"Faith, it's no lie Spruce do be after tellin' your honor. This is Locksley's camp, and not in it we'll stop the night. We'll be movin' on. It's the mouth of hell is this camp, and it's a foine woman, God hilf her soul, who was lid into it," added big Phil.

A gust of wind, let free by the opening, swept the snow like a wraith around the cabins into the open door, and there was moaning and creaking within. My two worthies turned tail and fled into the bush. I followed on their trail for some time before the sharp click of an ax and the voice of little Spruce singing:

"The caribou are white in face,
This is the season for the chase,
The snow is deep, the cold it bites!"

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told me the men were camping. Later, when we had settled down before our fire in that blissful state that follows good digestion, with the companion pipe, I turned to Phil, who was busy repairing the lacing of his snowshoe, and asked him if he had known Locksley.

Phil stopped his work, looked at me in a surprised and injured way, and said :

“ Wall, wall; and is it know Locksley your honor asks? Faith, me introdueshun to him was most quare intirely. One of me calves, bad ’cess to it, had bruk out and sthrayed away back into Muldoon’s bush. It was comin’ home I was after lukin’ for it, and I was sthumblin’ down along the trail in the dark, whin I hears some one shoutin’, ‘ Now, Night, to hell with you if you don’t keep the

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trail.' 'Locksley,' says I to me-silf, and I sthips behint a big black birch. Just as he came forninst me his feet caught in a root, and down he wint, and a bag of peraties he was shoulderin' slipt out of his houlth, and as the nick of the bag was untied, the peraties wint rowlin' down the mountain.

"'May the divil curse Muldoon,' says Locksley, 'and may the divil curse all those who won't get up at twelve o'clock at night to curse Muldoon. And if that blackguard, Phil McGinnis, don't kim out from behint that tree to hilp me gather those peraties, I'll put me blight upon him, too,' says Locksley.

"'Wall, wall; is that you, Mr. Locksley?' says I, kind of brave like, but it's thrimblin' I was with the fear that was on me.

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“ ‘ Just mesilf and his majesty, McGinnis; and you’ll do well to luk alive, man, for I’m in a hurry,’ says Locksley.

“ Faith, I naded no urgin’, and with a light from a rowl of birch-bark I rattled all the peraties I could find into the bag.

“ ‘ We’ll know each other better nixt time we meet,’ says Locksley, as he shouldered the bag and walked off into the dark after the dog.

“ ‘ Be gobs!’ thought I, ‘ and may that be a long time away.’ Sure it tuk two good glasses of Judy’s skalkeen to bring me around whin I got home. Ugh! it was aisier fur him to play with fire than for me to light me pipe with this coal,” said Phil, as he deftly picked out a small live coal from the fire, and keeping it

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quickly moving about in the palm of his hand, transferred it to his pipe (puff-puff). "Wasn't it you, little Spruce, wint clane mad at the sight av him wan night?"

"Tonnerre de Dieu! I 'av not mooch wat you call sens' lef' dat nit for sure. Dat was ver' bad scare I'm 'av. I go for a week to mak' de spruce gum at Lac Ste. Cecile, an' for mak' some fishin'. Ver' good, but when I'm clos' to Lac I remembre dat I leav' 'ome widout kees ma Rosalie. 'Dat's bad luck,' I say, an' I turn for go 'ome. Late on de night tam, I arrive on de place we see to-day. Dere was beeg fires for burn de logs an' stumps. Locksley, naked lak' he born, was run roun' wid beeg hanspik' for move de logs. He say, 'Com', debbil, giv' a hand; now, debbil, help; poosh,

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debbil, poosh,' an' de log jump roun' on de pile lak' she'm live. Ma hair stan' on en' I'm so scare, but I say planty prayer. Bime-by a log roll on hes toes. He dance 'bout an' 'av gran' fight wid de debbil an' call him ver' bad name, an' he wante on hes cabane an' slam de door. Den I nevere stop de run ontill I'm hide onder de bed-clothes wid ma Rosalie."

"But who was the woman, Phil, who came under Locksley's spell, and how did it happen?" I asked.

"Howly Saints! And did your honor niver hear till of that? Wall, wall! You must remimber Murtha who was kilt by a tree fallin' on him in the choppin'. Sure, the widdy tuk on foine at the wake with her scramin' an lamint-in' her dear Mike. A tidy bit of a

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cratur was Norah, and as indipindent in her ways as a led pig, with a fine timper av her own. There was no childer,—incumbrances I think they call them whin they belong to a widdy-man or a widdy-woman,—but mighty handy at other times, eh, Spruce? ”

Spruce grinned assent. He was the proud father of fourteen.

“ Sure, it wasn’t long after Murtha’s dith before siveral of the byes were dancin’ attindance about the widdy. Tim Deehey it was who seemed to have the inside thrack, and it’s him who towld me the story this way :

“ ‘ I was on me way one night to coort the widdy Murtha, but whin I kim near her house I saw the doore was closed, and there was no pig’s kittle bilin’ foorninst it. “ Sure, the widdy’s gone to

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kailey at Le Gendre's for the evenin'," think I to mesilf, "but I'll take a pake in the windy to be satisfied." Glory be to God, Phil! if I didn't see that thafe of the worrold, Locksley, sittin' close alongside of Norah on a binch, and thim as thick as two thaves, while he was puttin' his spell on her, as I could hear.

" " " But it's a bad name you have in the parish," says Norah.

" " " The divil is never as black as he's painted. Ah, ha! haw, haw!" laughed Locksley. "Sure they're mostly simples here, Norah, and I thwist thim 'round me finger."

" " " Ah, ye cunnin' sarpint," thinks I, "and it's swate Norah you'd be thwistin' 'round your finger, but I'll privint you."

" " " But, Locksley, it's not true

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you're in lague with the divil?" says Norah.

" " " It's clane out of me mind I am to be in lague with the handsomest woman in the parish," says Locksley.

" " " You're a distressful timpler," says Norah, " and I suppose I must give me 'yes' to yer pladin'."

" " " Faith, Norah, dear, there's nothin' so hard to resist as temptation, and since you've yailed to its seductive ways I'll do the same mesilf by takin' a kiss off those swate lips of yours that would tempt the owld boy himself," says Locksley.

" " The blackguard kissed her, Phil, and it's truth I'm tillin' ye, I saw the sparks fly.

" " " We'll lave this cruel cowl'd land behind us," says Locksley,

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“but we’ll lave no trace of our whereabouts. I’ve communicated with the owld one and it’s a warm wilcome he says he has for us.”

“ ‘Saints of Hiven! But the spell must have bin’ strong on Norah, for she laughed at this spache of Locksley’s, and says she: “Indade, Locksley, it’s a roastin’ I’m thinkin’ you’ll git whin the owld fellow sees what you’ve brought back.”

“ “ “We’ll lave here at onct,” says Locksley.

“ “ “I’m with you,” says Norah; “but you’ll be off now, Locksley, for I’ve some matters to attind to.”

“ “ “Faith, and so have I,” says I to mesilf, and I put off for Father O’Brien’s to get his riverence to come at onct to take the spell off Norah. He was in bed whin I

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got there, and not too well plased at me visit at that hour av the night.

“ “ You’ll kim now, your riverence, and the halo of a grate dade will be around your head.”

“ “ Go home, you fool,” says he. “ Sure it’s bilious you are, with your halos and other non-since. I’ll look you up in the mornin’ whin you’ve kem to your sinses.”

“ ‘ About tin in the mornin’ his riverence arrived, and after a cup of tay we started for the widdy’s. Phil, she was gone! As soon as we could git a party of the boys together, we tuk the thrail for Locksley’s camp. The doore of his cabin was open, but there was no one there. In the cinter of the flure a great hole was torn up, and

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some of the boys said there was a strong smell of sulphur about.

“ “ “ Lit this be a lisson to yes all to have no intercourse with avil,” says Father O’Brien. “ Poor Norah Murtha! We’ll lave this scene now, and you’ll mind what I’m after tillin’ yes.” ’

“ Little Spruce, pitch some logs on the fire. The insides of his honor are thrimblin’ with the cowl’d, as I can see,” said Big Phil.

The Romance of Ruther-
ford's Flat

The Romance of Rutherford's Flat

CAPTAIN HALFORD, of Her Majesty's 3—th Regiment of Foot, stationed at Quebec in 18—, came to our parish by chance, and remained through an accident. He always maintained that it was the luckiest thing that ever happened him, and surely a man should be the best judge for himself in such matters. Some of his brother officers at the time shook their heads and doubted, but we always doubt the wisdom of our friends in affairs of the heart, just as we fail to accept their advice when it comes to our turn to be afflicted with that ancient malady—love.

Romance of Rutherford's Flat

It happened in this wise: Dulkan, who lived behind the Monk's mountain in our parish, was a frequent caller at the Officers' Quarters in Quebec, where he sold such produce as his farm yielded, and fairly begged the clothes off the backs of the occupants with a charming abandon of modesty, but there was nothing he refused. In time he became a regular pensioner upon their bounty—an established institution, which a ready tongue and unbounded impudence helped him to maintain.

He was returning home one lovely June morning, by the road which follows the sinuous windings of the St. Charles River. The world was bright and joyous this sunny morning, and the old fellow was piping away in a cracked falsetto:

Romance of Rutherford's Flat

“ In the year '98, when our troubles was
great,
And 'twas treason to be a Milesian,”

when he came to the ford at the mill and stopped to give his horse a drink. A voice from up the bank called out :

“ Hello ! Dulkan. What are you doing here? ”

Dulkan ended his song and turning in the direction from which the voice proceeded, while a grin overspread his parchment face, he replied :

“ Shure, thin, it's your honor, Captain Halford, an' is it lukin' for goold in the river yez are, or maybe your coortin', an' faith it's a purty spot? ”

“ Either occupation would probably be more profitable than the one I'm engaged in,” laughingly replied Captain Halford.

Romance of Rutherford's Flat

“ Well, it's writin' poethry yez are, but that's a whaste av toime in in this divil's counthry where they spake only Frinch an' niver heerd ' Gillie Machree ' or ' Rory O'More.' ”

“ Wrong again, Dulkan; I'm trying the fishing, but luck seems to be against me.”

“ Fishin', is it? Faix, yez moight as well luk for smoked her-rin's as be thryin' for throuts in the St. Charles. Kim away, man, wid me an' I'll show yez a river where the throuts do be more plentiful than the laves on the trees, and longer than your arm.”

Perhaps it was fate which decided Halford to accept Dulkan's offer. At all events his kit was transferred from the cottage near by to Dulkan's cart, and Halford mounted to a seat beside its driver.

Romance of Rutherford's Flat

“It's at Rutherford's I'll be lavin' your honor.”

“And who may Rutherford be?” inquired Halford.

“Faith, he do be Thomas Rutherford, an Irish gentleman if iver there was wan, an' he owns the Flat. Tipperary niver turned out a foiner man, barrin' his timper, which is short whin an English invader kims along to make luv to Judy. So kape a civil dish-tance, me brave captain.

“‘Och hone! and what will I do?

Sure, my love is all crost,
Like a bud in a frost,
And there's no use at all in my going
to bed,
For 'tis dhrames and not sleep that
comes into my head.’

“Shure, the luv for a woman do play quare thricks on min,” continued Dulkan. “I should be rowlin' in wilth and me coach to-

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day if the soight of a pair av bare lig's at a dance hadn't lid me captive to the owner of thim, an' I married her and thim the very nixt week. Me father, pace to his memory now, drove me out av me ancistral home for me folly as he termed it. It's bare-ligged we've gone mostly since, by the same token, to make two inds mate, though it do be little av any mate we'll see on the mountain nixt winter, for the divil av a baliff kim out a while back and seized all me cattle for the payment of a note I gave to Maxwell for a bidsted and some other thrifles I bought at his sale."

Halford smiled a little cynically at Dulkan's picture of distress, but made no rejoinder, for at this moment a turn in the road on the mountain-side disclosed a pan-

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orama of such singular charm and beauty as to completely engage his attention. In all our province there is no more lovely spot than that known in our parish as the Flat. The river almost encircled it, with a great dark pool at the head and a still larger one at the foot, with a roaring rapid between, and a continuous rapid above and below. Mountains completely inclosed it, mountains clad in maples and birches on the lower side, and somber spruces to their very tops. It was peak upon peak as far as the eye reached. A high pointed-roofed house, white-washed and red-gabled, peeped out from a grove of aspens and white birches, while the Flat lay before it, carpeted in many shades of soft greens and bordered by the

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wild cherry and *poire* in masses of white blossoms.

Halford drew a long breath of satisfaction. Truly this seemed the promised land of lotus-eating—and angling.

Dulkin's salutation to Rutherford, as he drove up to the door, was: "I've captured wan av the inimy widout his uniform, an' it's shpyin' out the land he is, though he do say it's fishin' he wants. His name is Captain Halford."

Both Rutherford and Halford smiled at the introduction, and the latter said:

"Dulkin's partly right, Mr. Rutherford. I would like to surrender myself into your hands for a few days, if you are willing to harbor a spy into your fishing haunts."

"It's not much you ask," re-

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plied Rutherford, "and I fear we've little to offer you beyond a welcome and the best we have in the way of fishing."

The patriarchal appearance of Rutherford, with his long, wavy white hair and thick, curly gray beard, tall and erect, with a quiet dignity of manner and carriage, impressed Halford with a sense that here was an unusual man for his surroundings. His reflections at this point, however, were somewhat rudely interrupted by shouts of "Sooks them, Rover; sooks, boy!" and from around the corner of the house wildly dashed two calves, pursued by a black and white collie and a girl with streaming hair. One of the calves, in its blind efforts to escape, rushed headlong into Dulkan and laid him flat on his face in the dust of the

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road. Peals of laughter from the girl filled the air, and it was so infectious in its abandon, and the whole scene was so ludicrous, that Halford and Rutherford were compelled to join in the laugh, though the latter went to the assistance of Dulkan, who, we are ashamed to say, was spitting sand and profanity from his mouth in equal proportion.

The girl, at last realizing that a stranger was present, and a young and handsome one at that, hastily twisted her flying hair into a knot and stood abashed at her levity and generally disordered appearance.

“My daughter, Judy, Captain Halford,” said Rutherford simply; and as Halford bowed and shook hands, he owned to himself that Miss Judy was certainly strikingly

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beautiful. She was then nineteen, tall and graceful of figure, with a well-shaped head and rich, dark, wavy hair. The eyes were gray, the lashes long and soft, the eyebrows thick and almost straight. The mouth was large, with full warm lips, which, when parted, disclosed a set of white, firm teeth. Her complexion was clear and the color came and went with every passing emotion. The nose was somewhat between a Grecian and a pug, just the least bit saucy. When she smiled a great dimple made its appearance, and the lashes drooped over the eyes, but at other times they met yours with open frankness.

There were others in and out of our parish who thought as Halford did, and some of them had laid siege to Miss Judy's heart,

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but that citadel had thus far refused to capitulate—not even to Charles Darnell, the last and most favored-looking suitor. He still persisted, however, in his courting, with the hope born of desire that in time the garrison would be starved into surrendering the fortress. He came from over St. Michel mountain some two or three times a week to have his own heartstrings pulled and his temper tried by the imperious and lovely Judy.

Mrs. Rutherford made Captain Halford welcome to the house, and showed him to his room. It overlooked the rapid-tossed river, whose cadence blending with the ever-rustling poplars lent a feeling of delightful peacefulness to the place. These early June days in our Northland are instinct with

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the budding summer—full of pleasant, fresh odors and sounds and sights that hold all one's senses in dreamy bondage. The bank-side beneath the captain's window was decked with the pink-striped wood sorrel, the dwarf dogwood and belated dog-tooth violets. The maples, with their partially expanded leaves in delicate shades of reds and yellows, made the near mountain-sides gay with color, while the more distant mountains lay in purple haze.

In the early evening, when the shadows of St. Michel lay upon the upper pool and the *broue* from the rapids floated lightly upon its surface, Rutherford paddled the canoe slowly around it, while Halford made fierce battle with some of the great trout which lurked in its depths, until he admitted that

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he was content. Later, the two men sat on the long bench outside the open door of the house, and as they smoked, Rutherford told the story of his early struggles as a schoolmaster in Ireland, and the final decision to seek the New World to commence life anew for the sake of the children born, and those to come. There were no regrets, only a tender clinging to the memories of the land of his birth. Halford heard somewhat dreamily as he watched the great fires glowing and glimmering in the "burnings" on the hillsides and the weird shadows which flitted eerily about—the ghosts of fallen forest monarchs. Above the rising and falling sound of waters was borne to his ears snatches of a song. He caught the words of one line:

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“Her hair is like night, and her eyes
like gray morning.”

How well they described the singer. What a pleasant voice Miss Judy possessed.

Halford's stay of a few days lengthened into as many weeks. Any suggestion upon his part of a departure had been met with protests from all the members of the family, excepting Judy, but as all his more subtle arts and accomplishments were reserved for her benefit, and she had smiled her approval upon him, he remained on—a captive to her charms and his pleasant surroundings.

Darnell, however, who had come several times since Halford's arrival, quickly discovered the growing favor in which the latter was held by the Rutherfords. He spent his evenings in

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somewhat sulky silence and nursed his jealousy, while his imagination ran riot in planning some form of retaliation upon this handsome English captain who had dared intrude upon his territory. But of this Halford remained quite unconscious. He said to Darnell one evening as he was leaving:

“ I hear, Darnell, that you have a birch canoe. Can't you take me for a run down the rapids tomorrow? ”

An ugly thought leaped into Darnell's mind, but he answered with apparent cordiality:

“ Sure, I'd like nothing better. You'll take your fishing rig with you and some lunch and we'll make a day of it.”

As he wended his way homeward over the mountain, his re-

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flections were of the pleasant nature of the malicious revenge he would take upon Halford on the morrow. And as for Judy, she must be made now to understand that there was to be no more trifling. It must be "yes" or "no." Here a doubt arose in his mind as to which of these two Miss Judy might return him, but his love being stronger than his judgment, decided for him that it must be "yes," and so satisfying himself he crept into the house and to bed.

Halford, upon retiring to his room, lit his pipe and sat down for a quiet half-hour of revery. His holiday was drawing to a close. It had been a very happy time—the happiest he had ever known. The simplicity of the life had lent a joy to existence such as

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he had never experienced—and the fishing—was there ever before such fishing? He loved it all, and the close touch with nature—and Judy was most attractive. Halford sighed. He had oft'times longed to lead the life of a country gentleman. Was not this the very spot to settle himself, where his income would go so far toward realizing this dream? A captain in a marching regiment, after all, was only a pawn in the game of martial chess. Would Judy marry him? At this stage of his reverie his pipe went out, leaving these knotty questions unsolved.

Judy, after a short period of star-gazing, devoutly said her rosary, but as she told off the beads and said the responses, between each there ran the refrain, "He loves me, loves me not," as

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the children are wont to say as they pluck the petals off the marguerites. Then, like the sensible girl she really was, she blew out her candle and went directly to sleep.

It was but little after daybreak when Darnell awakened old Mary McSweeny, the ferry-woman at the lower pool, to put him across the river. She came out grumbling at being disturbed so early.

"Shure, Charles Darnell, it's not long since you wint the other way. Is it the handsome English captain at Rutherford's that makes you so ristless?"

"Damn the captain," replied Darnell; "I'll give him a souse in the river to-day, Mary, that will cool him off and send him about his business, I'll warrant."

"Faix, it's wicked enough yez

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are for anything," said old Mary to herself, as Darnell disappeared over the bank.

An hour later Halford and Darnell were circling the upper pool in the latter's birch canoe; Halford, with the intense zest of a highly organized nature, reveling in the beauty of the early morn amid his idyllic surroundings and the novel experience of the strange craft that seemed so instinct with life and yet so completely under the control of Darnell, who, standing erect in the stern, with slightest touch of pole guided it whither he would. The trout were in complaisant humor until hooked, when they showed such a sudden change of opinion and contested the point so keenly with Halford as to set his blood tingling with excitement. An

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unusually large and active fish gave him a twenty minutes' struggle ere it was brought to net.

"Now, Darnell, for the rapids and a try at the lower pool," exclaimed Halford.

Darnell, without a word, turned the canoe into the current. Quivering for an instant in the shock of the heavy water, it quickly gathered way and the mad race down the river commenced. Darnell still stood erect with poised pole to give instant direction to the canoe to avoid the bowlders upon which the waters hurled themselves with never-ceasing roar. They were close, now, to the lower pool. Darnell at this instant gave the canoe a slight push to the right, apparently lost his balance, and the canoe promptly turned upside down, leaving the

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two men struggling in the seething current. Halford, heavily clothed and totally unprepared for so unequal a contest, was hurled and tossed about, ever carried downward; now buried beneath the waters, again to be cast upon the foam-crests. Driven against a rock, his head was deeply gashed. He was barely able to drag himself into the shallows at the head of the pool, when he became unconscious and lay there, with upturned face barely out of the water.

Darnell, lightly clad and clinging to his pole, quickly forced his way to the bank and then strolled down the shore to recover his canoe and offer his feigned regrets to Halford; but coming suddenly upon the latter, lying in the shallow with white face and fore-

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head cut and bloody, so terrified and unnerved the shocked and startled man, who saw now a tragedy where only a farce was intended, that he dropped to his knees beside Halford and gave vent to his grief and despair in open expression of his folly and wickedness. He did not hear the hurried footsteps behind him, and only a hand placed upon his shoulder and a startled voice exclaiming, "Charles Darnell, do I hear you say you did this dreadful thing, and is he—is he dead?" roused the grief-stricken man to his senses. Turning his haggard face to the questioner, he saw Judy standing over him with an expression of horror and repugnance showing in hers as she awaited his answer.

"As God is my judge, it was

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only to be a joke, Judy, and my heart's broken for my folly. Can you help me carry the body to the bank? ”

Unnerved as she was, she yet found strength to help Darnell carry the unconscious form of Halford to a grassy slope, where they laid it gently down. As they did so, a sigh escaped his lips and his eyes opened for an instant.

“ *He lives—he lives!* ” passionately cried Judy. “ Run for your life, Charles Darnell, and bring help.”

The relieved man needed no further prompting, and flew back to Rutherford's. Judy cried and laughed somewhat hysterically, but never for an instant relaxed her efforts to restore Halford to consciousness, and he, like the artful fellow he was, came to his

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senses, and seeing Judy bending over him with tears rolling down her cheeks, and finding a great comfort in feeling his hand between her two soft, warm ones, discreetly closed his eyes again, and even allowed his forehead to be bathed and kissed without making any sign, but revived so quickly thereafter that poor Judy's maidenly modesty received a shock lest she was discovered, and she blushed crimson. But her secret was now in Halford's possession, and his own fate was sealed.

Rutherford came with Darnell, and Halford was removed to the house. Darnell watched for an opportunity, and beckoning Judy aside, said to her: "Judy, I've done a great wrong this day and I'm going to ask Halford's and

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your forgiveness, and then I'm going away from here forever."

And Judy, touched by his penitence, freely gave it.

A few evenings later, Judy said she was going down to the point to look after a pet lamb.

"May I go, too?" queried Halford, who was then convalescent.

"You may, Mr. Halford, if you will carry the pan of salt." When they came to the big elm on the bank whence Judy had witnessed the upsetting of the canoe, she involuntarily shuddered as she recalled the scene. Halford slipped his arm around her waist, saying as he did so: "Judy, you were thinking of that wretched morning, but now, dearest, I want to return that kiss you gave me then, and to say that I love you and want you to be my wife, for that

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was the luckiest accident that ever happened me when I learned your secret."

Judy, blushing but unresisting, allowed Halford to take the kiss. Not many months later, Halford and his wife became residents of the portion of the Flat which Rutherford had presented to Judy as a wedding gift, and Halford's dream had become a reality.

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